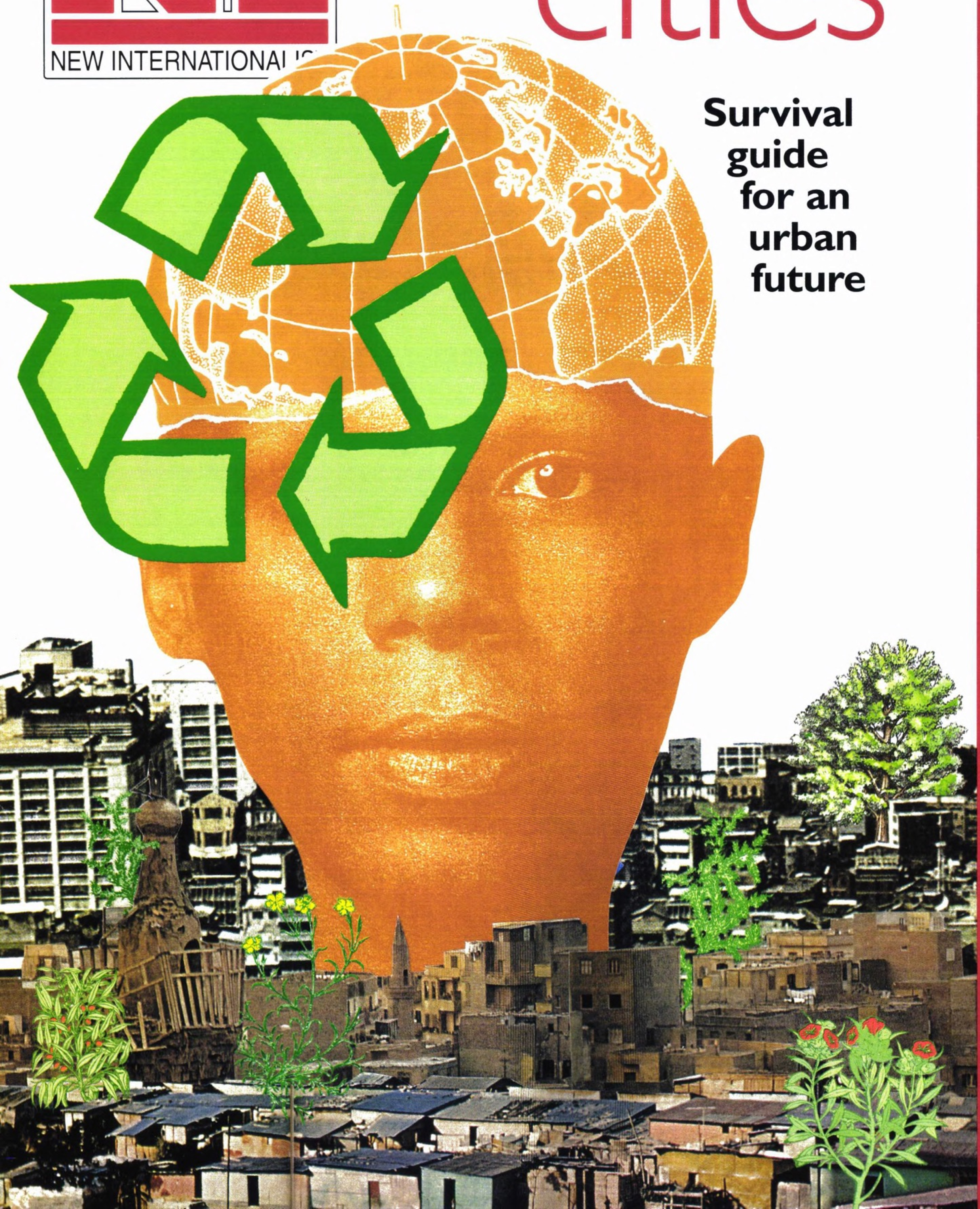
No. 313 / JUNE 1999

THE NI NEW INTERNATIONALIST

Green cities

Survival guide for an urban future



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the world of corporate propaganda

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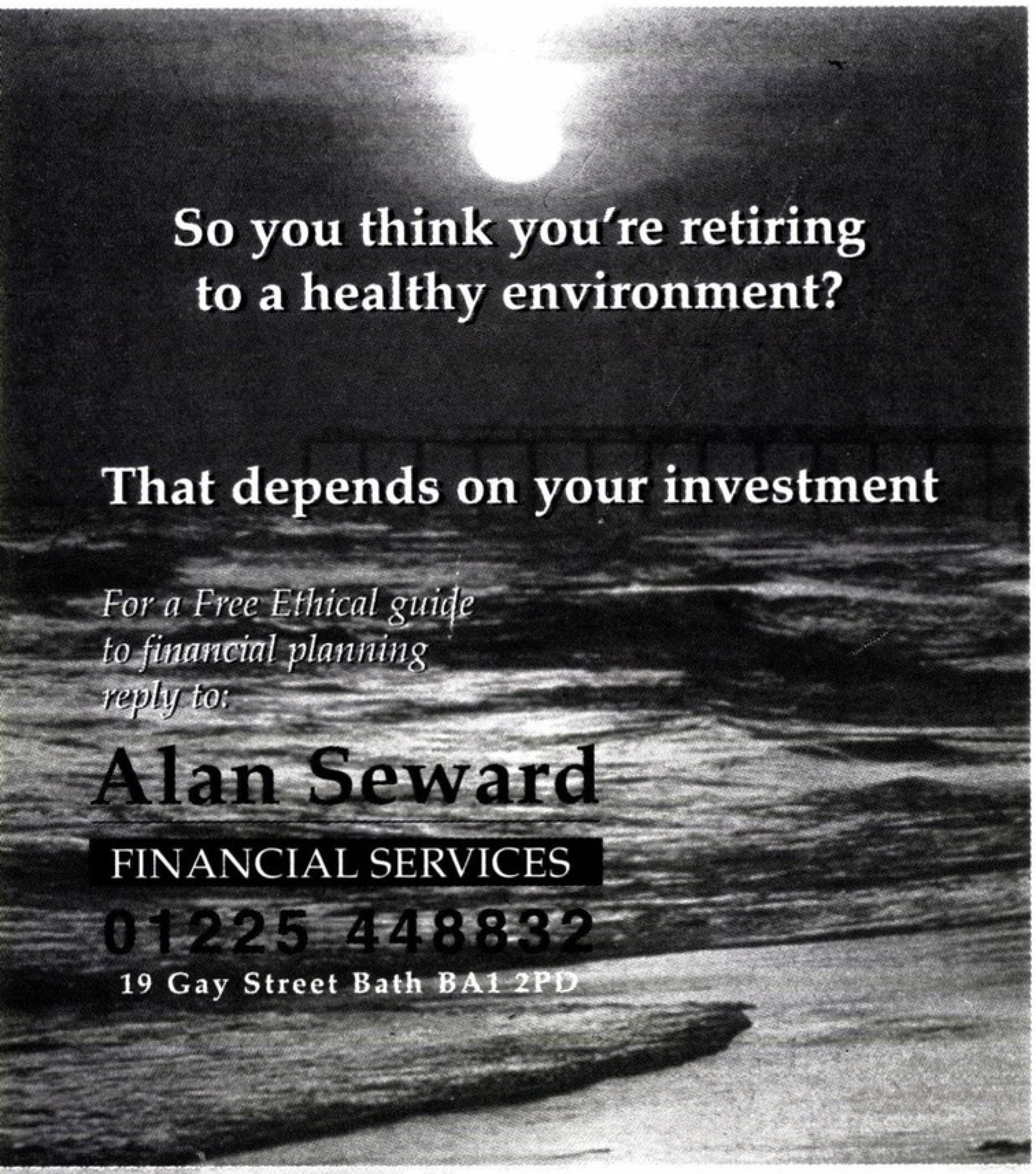So you think you're retiring
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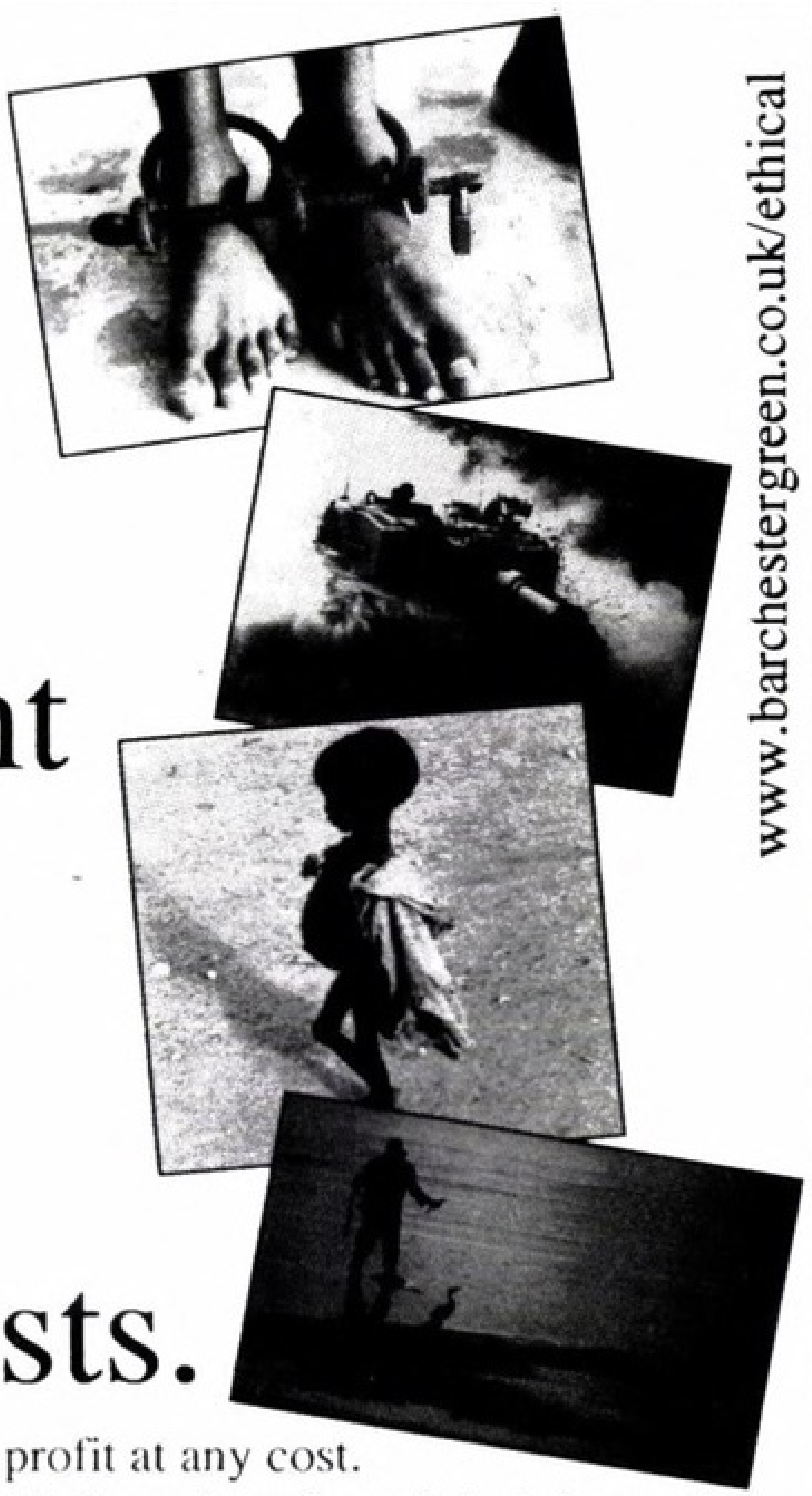
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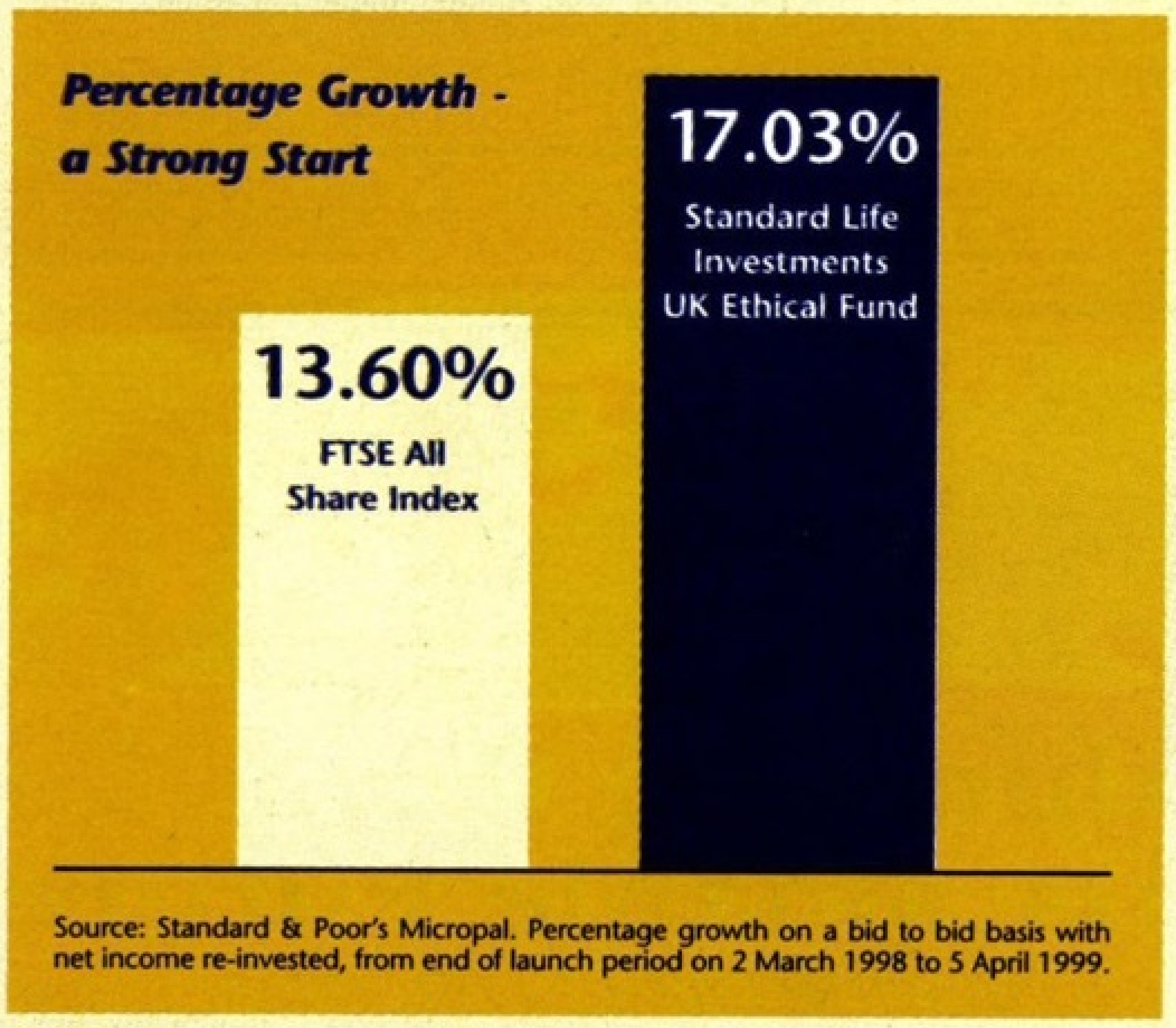

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FRONT COVER: **DARREL REES**.
MAGAZINE DESIGNED BY **ALAN HUGHES**.

THIS MONTH'S **THEME**

Green cities

FROM THIS MONTH'S **EDITOR**

WHILE I've been working on this issue of the magazine, the horrors of war and genocide have been ravaging the Balkans. In such a climate, producing an **NI** on 'Green cities' has at times seemed irrelevant. It's certainly not top of the list of priorities for the people of Pristina or Belgrade, or even a very high one for those of us living in countries which have become embroiled in the war.

For most of us, watching the daily events unfold, the effects of armed conflict are horribly obvious. But there are many hidden, psychological effects too. Devastation happens so suddenly; life speeds up. Instant reactions are what counts. Thinking about the long term gets put on the back burner. Or is forgotten altogether.

Another psychological effect is that as conflict deepens so does our tendency to think in monochrome; in terms of right and wrong; goodies and baddies. The colourful complexity of life, and its more subtle shades, gets blasted out.

In time, when the carnage is over and the people of the Balkans start to rebuild their devastated cities, towns and villages, colour, including greenery, will creep back into the picture. Sustainability, in every sense, will be a priority. There will be a lot to deal with on the political, social and economic fronts. But there will also be much to face on the environmental front: the effects of depleted uranium (from NATO bombs), chemical and oil pollution, landmines and all the other noxious legacies of modern warfare.

Perhaps people will start to grow food, plant trees, rebuild homes and try to turn their settlements into habitable places again. Such actions reflect real-life needs, but they are also acts of faith in the future. Greenery, vegetation, has always represented the spirit of regeneration and hope. Not for nothing is the symbol of peace an olive branch.

There is always something deeply moving about people greening their most adverse environments. I recall a man serving a life sentence in Lurigancho prison, set in the Peruvian desert, who had somehow managed to transform the most dusty and unpromising plot into an inspiration of flowers and vegetables.

Greening cities is about the here and now. It is about creating better urban environments today. But it is also about the future – and our duty to future generations. The way we live in cities now is dramatically unsustainable. We've simply got to do it differently. And many people are trying just that. All over the world there are examples of green ideas, initiatives and practice, from Hong Kong to Havana, from Chattanooga to Chimbote, from Adelaide to Accra.

This issue of the **NI** is full of them.

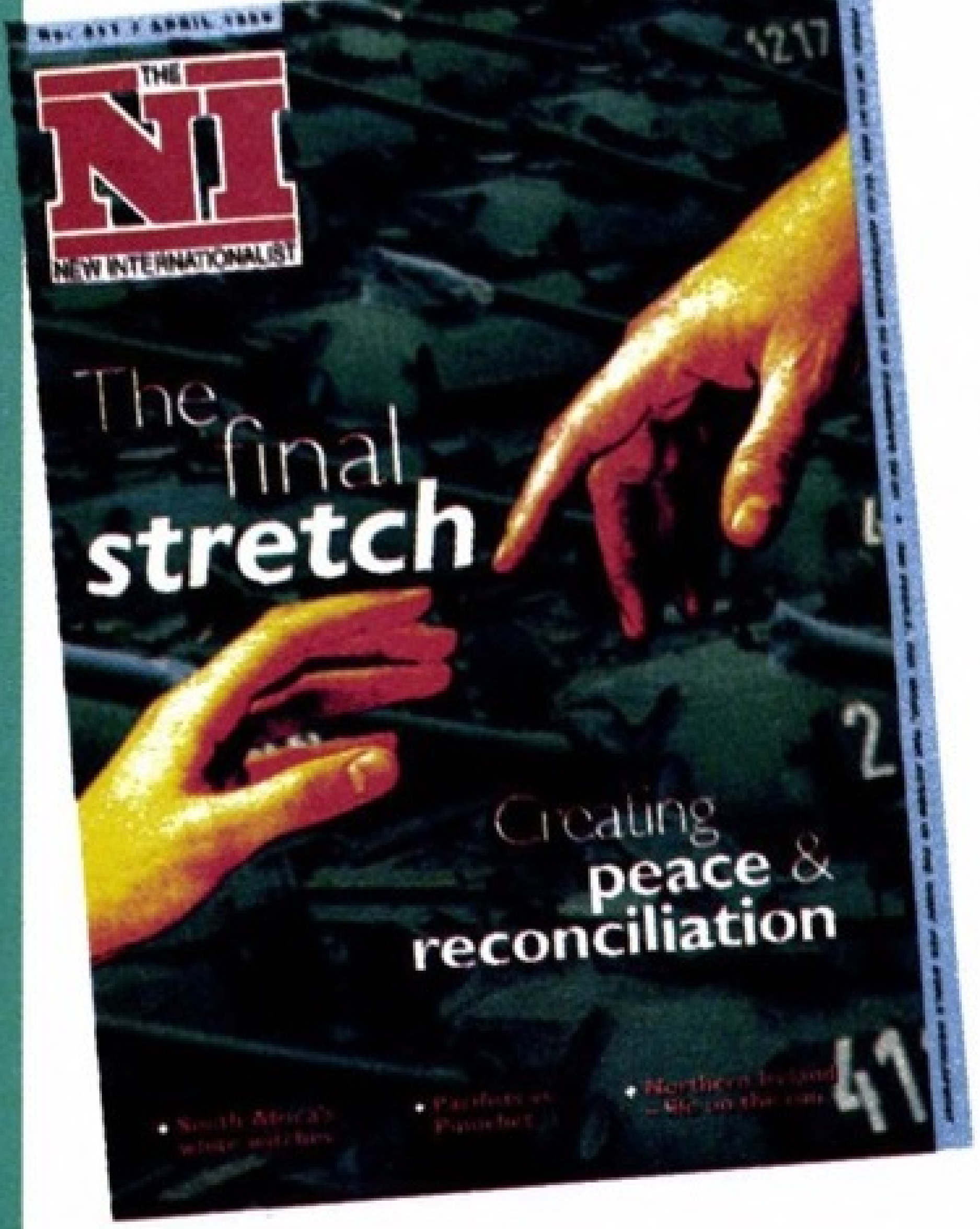
Vanessa Baird

Vanessa Baird
for the ***New Internationalist*** *Co-operative*

Letters

The final stretch

'The final stretch – Creating Peace and Reconciliation,' says your front cover which flags Nancy Scheper-Hughes' piece on South Africa (**NI 311**). Final? Nowhere did I see the essential word 'reparations'. There have been some – but drops in the ocean compared with the 500 billion Rands or more that the whites owe the blacks for apartheid's huge rip-offs (quite apart from compensation for the suffering).



Take the huge historical fraud alone. The whites conquered the blacks and took most of their land. Not content with that, they then faked history itself. Apartheid's propaganda told the world that the whites got there before the blacks and settled seven-eighths of the land (in fact the blacks settled more than 50 per cent before the whites arrived). Then the whites passed racist laws stopping blacks from owning property in the whites' (false) historical seven-eighths and so took most of the rest, (30 times more land and mineral wealth for a white than for a black, still).

In simple human terms: someone invades your home and takes half of it from you. Then they produce forged title deeds and steal most of the rest. Then you later all get together, have a good cry and say 'isn't reconciliation wonderful?' But the invaders keep nearly all they took.

The final stretch? Perhaps it is.

John Clarke
Uxbridge, England

The New Internationalist welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address and e-mail are inside the front cover.

Best of both worlds

Anouk Ride's article on the appalling war in Bougainville (**NI 311**) oversimplifies the issues. It cannot be written off as another example of exploitation and pollution similar to the Ogoni and Shell in Nigeria. The mine provided better working conditions than would be found in most places in the world and the standard of living for the workers was infinitely superior to conditions on the mainland, as those who fled to Port Moresby discovered. Independent reports indicate that the copper found in the rivers was leeching naturally from the copper-rich earth, the flora and fauna being adapted to this natural pollution.

Francis Ona opposes change of any kind but other groups fighting the company were motivated by a desire to improve their circumstances. A modern industrial development such as the Bougainville mine would be welcomed in many communities despite its drawbacks and could finance a good health and education service.

Might this not have been an opportunity to control development and get the best of both worlds for the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville?

Hilary M Taylor
Leeds, England

War is no solution

The escalation of violence in Yugoslavia has strengthened extremist forces on all sides and has degraded the space for political opposition and democratic development in the whole region. The NATO bombing has created the space for a brutal operation by the Yugoslav security forces, which will probably result in an Albanian-free Kosovo. Yugoslavia will be destroyed, many human lives will be lost, many refugees created, and Milosevic's regime will be stronger than it ever was.

The NATO bombings aimed at forcing Milosevic to sign a peace 'agreement' and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe have completely failed. It seems that the only reason for continuing the attacks is NATO's lack of alternative strategy. NATO's aim is now being defined as 'reducing Yugoslav military resources'. This can be interpreted as meaning they do not know what else to do, and that they do not know how to finish this terrible action without admitting that they have made a mistake.

We are convinced that war can be no solution and that a ceasefire agreement or final peace agreement is better than continuing the present war. Of course large-scale armed conflicts cannot be resolved solely through political agreements. But this does not mean that military action is the logical, or only, alternative.

From a political agreement we expect a framework which would make peace building possible. Building peace is a long-term process; violence is a short-term response. Peace can not be imposed. One day of war means years of rebuilding trust and reconciliation in a society.

Let us remember all the human beings involved in this tragedy.

Center for Nonviolent Action,
Sarajevo, Bosnia

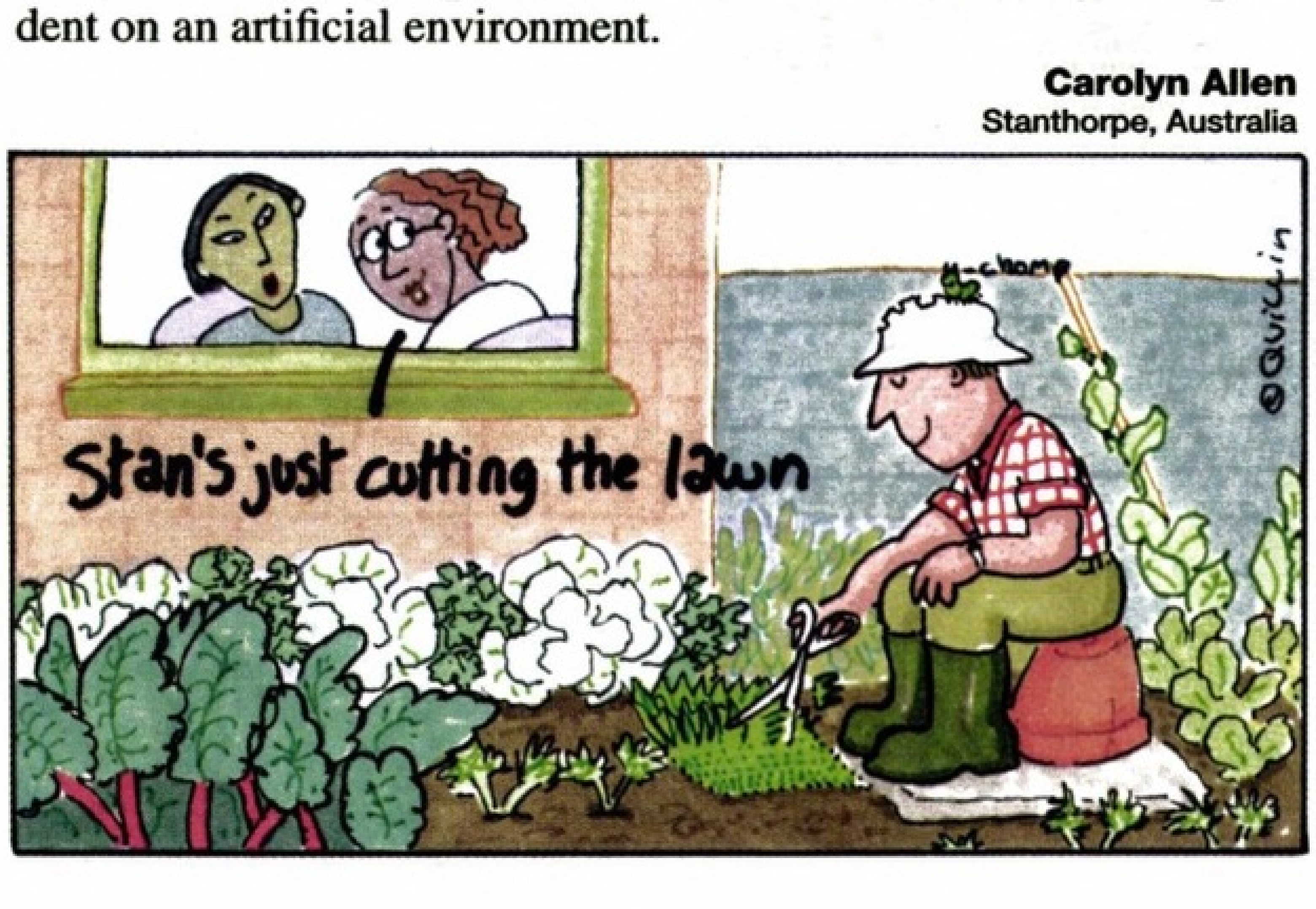
Food, not lawns

There is much speculation, much worrying and much analysis regarding human population numbers and the earth's ability to sustain us all. I read all these letters in the **NI** with one glaring paradox staring me in the face.

Almost wherever one goes, very few people make use of their own gardens and their 'own' rainfall to grow even a little of their own food. If we all contributed just a little, think how much less pesticide would be used commercially. It astonishes me that we all (in developed countries) sit by and water lawns, not food, whilst admonishing others for their various practices.

Does it take really so much effort to plant a bean or a zucchini together with a tree? Responsibility begins at home, and our children should grow up with the knowledge of how food is grown and enjoy the magical process of growing it. They should feel the confidence in being a part of nature – rather than being so dependent on an artificial environment.

Carolyn Allen
Stanthorpe, Australia


Stan's just cutting the lawn

Community values

I am unsure how helpful it is to bemoan how truly poor the poor are and how excessively rich the rich are. There seems in an attempt to demythologize poverty a risk of trading one lie (it is their own fault) for another (they are victims of the rich). In your issue on poverty (**NI 310**) Zygmunt Bauman makes a valid though limited point. Fear of poverty has become a belief which helps drive the engines of consumer society; it also invites despair on the part of the impoverished. That fear is a corollary of the myth that money/material wealth buys happiness.

If poverty requires a solution, it may lie in education, but of a moral rather than a technical variety. Such education (for rich and poor alike) would emphasize the infinite worth of every human, our responsibility to our neighbours and our neighbours' children, and the sad consequences of following a life of self-indulgence.

Legislative imposition of such values usually achieves the wrong effect. Yet teaching such values in societies today seems to many archaic. Ideologies of individual rights increasingly become married to the ethics of individualism. Most believe they have to get the very most out of the one life they have to live, all else is secondary. If we believed in the values of community, issues of material inequity would more naturally take care of themselves. But how are we to find the faith to believe in such things?

Gordon Jackson,
Perth, Canada

Disturbing photo

The photo of hugging on page 12 of your issue on poverty (**NI 310**) has disturbed me. It tries to show how North and South have overcome barriers and come very close. But even though it shows the closeness of North and South, it reveals, perhaps symbolically, how dependent the South is on the North.

The *adivasi* Indians were happy to go to Germany and did not react as expected. But the photo suggests the blissful fawning of a poor man so glad to be able to hold a white man almost in a servile and grovelling manner, perhaps with the expectation of continued patronage. And Andreas seems to be trying to refrain from touching him.

I know photos can sometimes convey a deceptive message, and perhaps Andreas did reciprocate the moment the photo was taken, but I think the **NI** should be more careful about its choice of photos.

Aida Ahmed
Oxford, England

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the New Internationalist.

Letter from Mongolia

A month in the country

Louisa Waugh visits nomadic friends – and their animals – in Mongolia's remotest mountains.

'THAT goat, the black one over there,' called Hulan. 'That's the one we need.'

She gestured vaguely towards a cluster of black goats who all eyed me suspiciously. It was eight in the morning and we were in the throes of milking 50 goats who all had to be tethered first. I was already exhausted. Goats are faster than you think – and they all looked the same to me.

Hulan, one of my teaching colleagues in Tsengel, had invited me to spend the summer horse-riding and herding with her nomadic family. I was delighted. I pictured myself lolling next to a cool river, collecting stories for my book, swimming, horse-riding and learning to milk the odd goat or yak. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Mongolian herders are busiest in summer – milking their goats, sheep, cows and yaks, shearing the sheep (with scissors) herding on steep mountain slopes, collecting dry dung for fuel, and water for cooking and washing. The work is endless.

Hulan's mother Dere-Huu, a statuesque 56-year-old with cheeks burnt to the colour of oak, always rose at 5 am. The rest of us got up at 6.30 every morning. When I could finally bear to open my eyes, the early-morning light was gorgeous. We were camped 90 kilometres west of Mongolia's furthest-west village. The mountains were snow-capped, the hills coated in dense pine-forest concealing ripening berries, and the rivers clear as glass. But I've never worked so hard in my life.

Goats aren't difficult animals to milk, but it takes a bit of practice. That first morning Dere-Huu was on her eighth goat while I still grimly tugged at my second. To add insult to its reluctant dribble of milk, the third goat kicked my pail over. I was mortified.

We lived on goat- and yak-milk – boiling and separating it to make thick crusted cream, curdling it into soft cheese and yoghurt, fermenting gallons to produce Mongolia's famous *airag* drink and even distilling the *airag* for *shimin arkhi*, the purest vodka you'll find anywhere.

While the men-folk went off hunting, Hulan and Dere-Huu patiently taught me to wash sheep wool, stretch and dry it on the rocky riverside, beat the wool with sticks until it was fluffy and finally roll it into layers of new felt for the walls of the *ger*. I learned to churn butter, to dry cheese into rock-hard but edible curds (*arrul*) and to cook marmot, a large steppe rodent Mongolians are partial to.

But we did relax – at dusk every evening we sat around the cracked tin stove drinking hot, frothing yak's milk. The wooden *ger* door was open, animals silhouetted in the long shadows. Friends and relatives visited on horseback almost daily. We were invited en masse to a nearby wedding party, where we toasted the bride and groom with *shimin arkhi*, ate platters of fresh mutton and horse meat with our fingers, and the Mongolians sang their hearts out. Toddlers laughed and cried while older people, their faces creased from lives in the sun, recited poetry. I just sat and beamed.

The day after the wedding, I swam at lunchtime. But by early evening the mountains directly behind us were dusted with fresh snow. Now the cold rain battered our *ger* every two or three days. The roof leaked twice and we had to bail out, crouched by the stove, drenched and shivering.

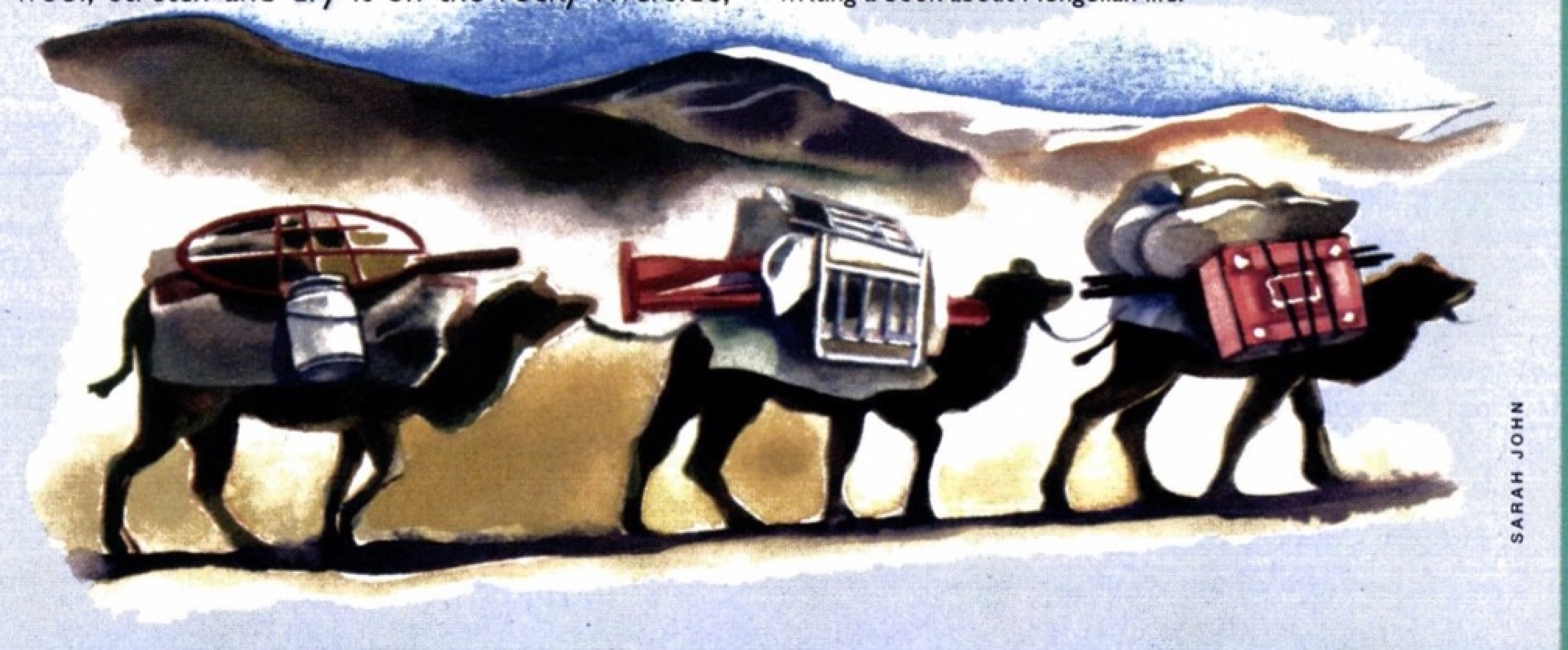
'How do you survive here in winter?' I asked Dere-Huu, who had spent her life in these mountains.

'Oh Louisa,' she replied, grinning broadly, 'the snow can come up to here'. She slapped one of her broad thighs. 'But the men gather hay for the livestock in autumn and we move to our wooden cabin 60 kilometres from here.'

Dere-Huu and her family move five times a year. The people go on horseback. Their large *ger* and all their possessions – the ancient chests and wall-hangings, the stove and the two narrow beds are all carried by their three camels.

Our final morning with Dere-Huu and her family dawned sunny and cool. A truck was heading back to Tsengel and so, unfortunately, were Hulan and I. Laden with *arrul* and cheese, I hugged Dere-Huu. We clambered up on to the open truck and waved as it clumsily wove its way eastwards. ■

Louisa Waugh has been living and working in Mongolia and is writing a book about Mongolian life.



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Update

Hope for the homeless – Government pays compensation for child's murder.

NIGEL DICKINSON / STILL PICTURES

Gone but not forgotten

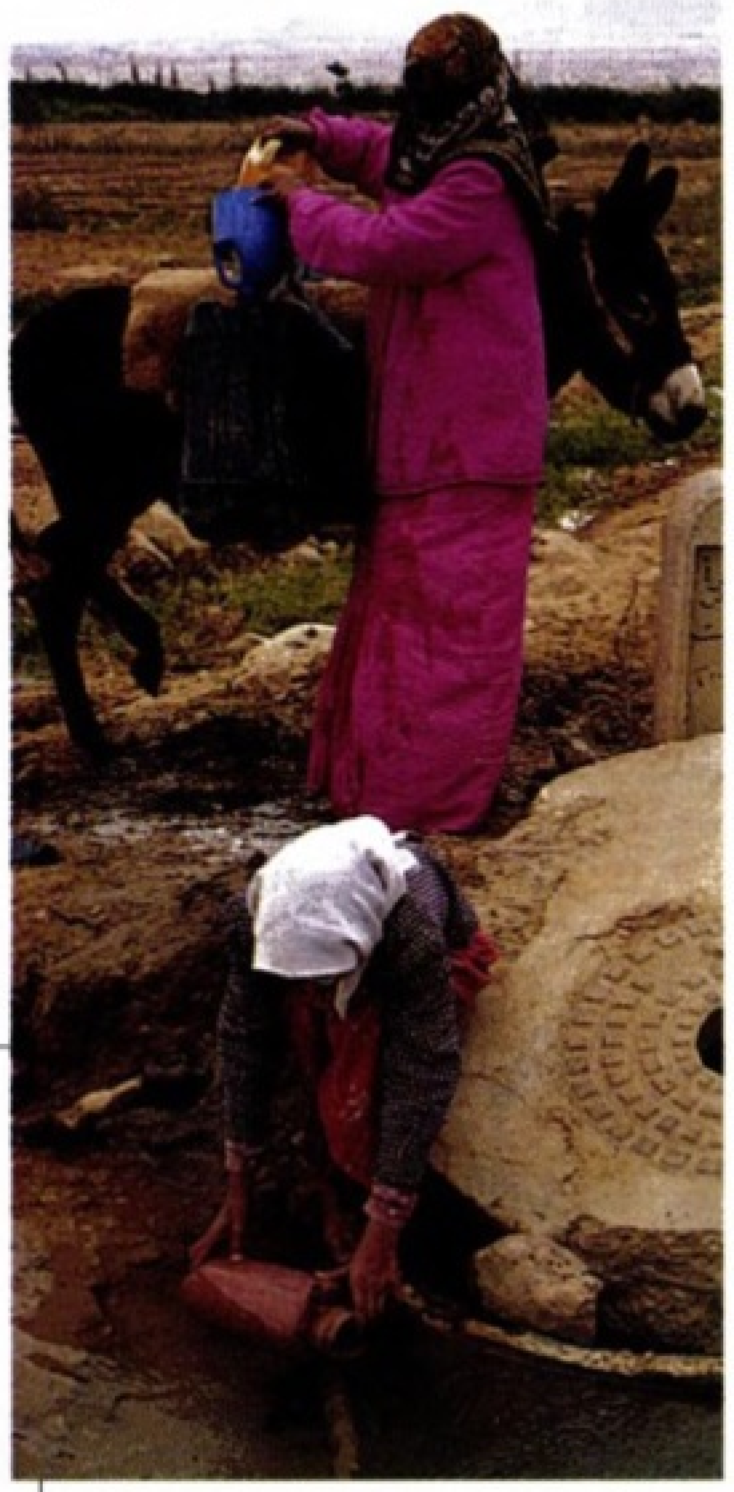
The Guatemalan Government has announced that it will pay compensation for the murder of street kid Nahaman Carmona López who was kicked to death by four policemen in 1990. The four officers were eventually convicted and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in 1992.

At the time public employees were also ordered to pay 20,000 quetzales ($3,160) to the dead boy's mother but the money was never paid. Bruce Harris, from Casa Alianza which presented the case for compensation, says: 'While the case of Nahaman represents a very good start in terms of official acknowledgement of human-rights abuses, the Government still needs to do more to guarantee the application of laws which will protect the victims of human-rights abuses – especially when the victims are homeless children.'

Casa Alianza

Drought and diplomatic dilemmas

The worst drought in 50 years has led Israel to cut the supply of desperately needed water to Jordan. The failure of the winter rains – only 40 per cent of normal in Israel – will have a devastating impact on Jordan, which suffered a severe water shortage last year. Guertin Baskin, director of the Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information in Jerusalem says: 'By summer people in Amman may be getting only one or two days' water a week. It is destabilizing for the regime.' Israel is pledged by treaty to supply Jordan with 45 million cubic metres of water annually. But now Israel has told the Jordanian Government that it can only send 40 per cent of this. Baskin, who has studied regional water problems for 20 years, says: 'For Israel the water is an economic issue. For Jordan it is a survival issue.'



Water levels drop in Jordan.

JEAN-LEO DUGAST / PANOS PICTURES

Patrick Cockburn/*Middle East Realities*

Lawyers join anti-MAI struggle

A citizens' initiative is underway in Canada which challenges the legitimacy of the Canadian Government to negotiate the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The Defence of Canadian Liberty Committee (DCLC) took the Federal Government to court in April. According to the DCLC: 'The MAI is unconstitutional under Canadian law because it gives entrenched rights to international banks and foreign corporations guaranteed by international law which Canadian citizens do not have... This is contrary to the principle of equality before the law which is part of the Canadian constitution enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedom.'

Michel Chossudovsky/Third World Network Features

For further information see: www.canadianliberty.bc.ca/legaldocs/index.html

HUMAN RIGHTS

The shocking truth

The rich world's neglect of female youth

Young girls and women endure hunger, poverty and violence in one of the richest countries in the world – the US. Cornell University historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg says: 'Although young women today enjoy greater freedom and more options than their counterparts of a century ago, they are also under more pressure and at greater risk.'

One of these is poverty – one in four children under six years of age is poor. But female-headed households are particularly poor – 55 per cent of all children in such homes live in poverty, and 67 per cent of black female-headed households live in poverty. Many of such homes are headed by teenagers or young women.

Nearly three million children are reported to be victims of abuse and neglect in the US. But the plight of teenagers is even more shocking. In a typical year, one out of eight teenagers gets a sexually-transmitted disease and one in ten teenage girls becomes pregnant. One in ten teenage boys and one in five adolescent girls has attempted suicide at some point.

Psychologist Mary Piper comments that girls 'face incredible pressure to be beautiful and sophisticated, which in junior high means using chemicals and being sexual'. The belief that beauty is thin preoccupies many girls – in San Francisco a survey of 494 schoolgirls found that more than half described themselves as overweight while only 15 per cent were so by medical standards. At the age of nine, 31 per cent thought they were too fat and 81 per cent of ten-year-olds were dieters.

Alarmingly, girls and young women are not only more likely to be victims of social pressures and poverty, but they are also subject to growing levels of violence. The United Nations Children's Fund says: 'In the US domestic violence is the biggest single cause of injury to women, accounting for more hospital admissions than rapes, muggings and road accidents combined.'

Increasingly girls are attacked by their peers. Rapists are getting younger with under-18s committing one in five of all rapes and under-15s committing one in 20. Sexual attacks by 13- and 14-year-olds have doubled in the last decade. And far from being random attacks by individuals, in places like New York gang rapes and attacks on girls are becoming more common. One municipal swimming pool in the city had five such attacks in a week. ■

Bharat Dogra/Third World Network Features.

JEREMY HORNER / PANOS PICTURES

North Korean crisis

The famine in North Korea is comparable to the Ethiopian famine in the mid-1980s, says David Morton from the United Nations World Food Programme. He says that large-scale assistance is needed for at least three years to turn the situation around.

The food shortage has produced a generation of stunted and dramatically underweight children. Adults have been forced to leave their jobs to search for food, says Morton. A survey conducted last year found that 62 per cent of children under seven years old suffered from mental-development problems.

Down to Earth Vol 7 No 21

Tears over spilt oil

Ten years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, only two species – the Pacific herring and sea otters – in Alaska's coastline ecosystem have recovered. Species like common loons, harbour seals and killer whales have made little or no progress towards recovery, say scientists.

More than 10.8 million gallons of crude oil spilled when the Exxon Valdez tanker ran aground in March 1989. The slick covered more than 1,600 kilometres of coastline, killing an estimated 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbour seals, 250 bald eagles and up to 22 killer whales.

Drillbits and Tailings Vol 4 No 4

No sweat shopping

Sweatshops on the Pacific island of Saipan have had orders drop by 25 per cent since human-rights lawsuits were launched in California against buyers and retailers. As the island is part of the US territory of the Northern Mariana Islands, its garments carry a 'Made in the USA' label. The industry employs around 40,000 Filipino and Chinese migrants and earns $1.2 billion a year – which is virtually the island's only income.

Human-rights groups allege that labour conditions in Saipan violate US laws. These include claims that workers were underpaid, recruited illegally, locked in factories, beaten and forced to have abortions.

Pacific Islands Monthly Vol 69 No 3

Forests and financial crisis – five facts

◆ When the financial crisis hit Indonesia, industrial pollution rose by 15 per cent while industrial production fell by 18 per cent.

◆ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that an additional 20 per cent of the population in Indonesia and 12 per cent in both South Korea and Thailand will fall into poverty.

◆ Crisis-hit countries Russia, Brazil and Indonesia rank first, third and fifth respectively among the world's nations in the amount of remaining frontier forest – totaling 47 per cent of the world's ancient forests.

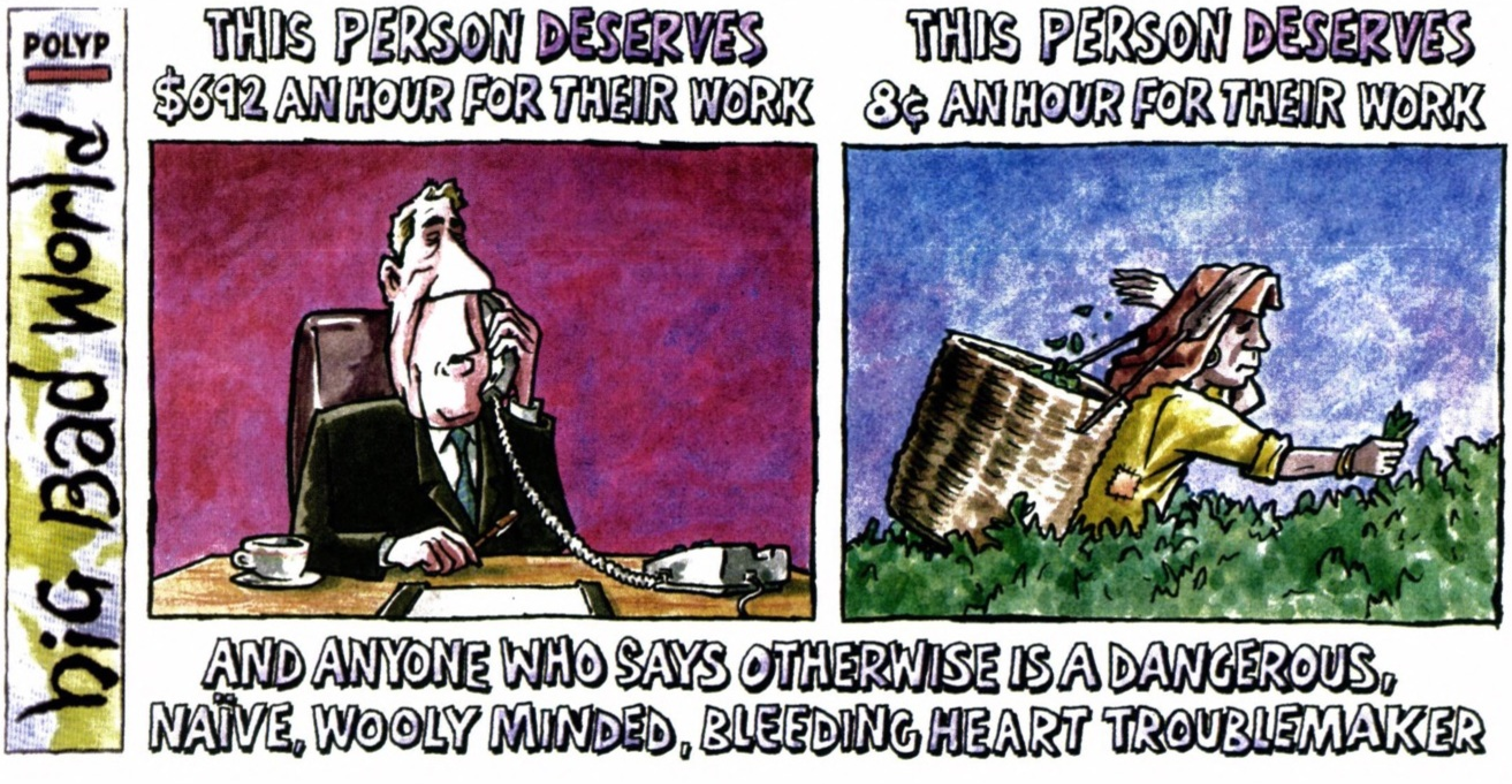
◆ In order to meet targets set by the IMF, the Brazilian Government has slashed spending on environmental programmes by two thirds.

◆ Under IMF pressure, the Government of Indonesia lifted a log-export ban and cut the log-export tax from 200 per cent to 30 per cent.

Face the Facts/Friends of the Earth US

DARIO NOVELLINO / STILL PICTURES

IMF rolls back Indonesia's log taxes.


POLYP
big bad world
THIS PERSON DESERVES $692 AN HOUR FOR THEIR WORK
THIS PERSON DESERVES 8¢ AN HOUR FOR THEIR WORK
AND ANYONE WHO SAYS OTHERWISE IS A DANGEROUS, NAÏVE, WOOLY MINDED, BLEEDING HEART TROUBLEMAKER

Update

HUMAN RIGHTS

Eye-opening experience

New campaign aims to make more people see the new millennium

THE number of blind people around the world stands at 45 million and is projected to double in 20 years. 'People are 10 times more likely to go blind in the developing world than people in the developed world, and 80 per cent of these cases are preventable,' says Vindy Baines from Sight Savers International. In response, a new campaign is aiming to eradicate preventable blindness within the next 20 years. The campaign and the umbrella organization co-ordinating it are called Vision 2020: The Right to Sight. It's a joint initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) and 19 international eye-care charities.

Vision 2020 will tackle four types of preventable blindness: cataracts, river blindness, trachoma and child blindness. Affecting over 20 million people, cataracts are believed to be related to exposure to ultraviolet rays – putting the South more at risk. A 20-minute operation, costing only $24, can remove cataracts and restore sight entirely.

Looking ahead – the number of blind children could double in 20 years.

TRYGVE BOLSTAD / PANOS PICTURES

Another leading cause is river blindness, a contagious disease caused by a parasitic worm spread by the black similium fly. 'In some villages in Central and Western Africa 50 per cent of the adults are affected,' says Baines. 'It is the children who suffer most because they have to work or act as guides for their blind parents or grandparents.' Sight Savers hopes that distribution of the drug Mectizan will eliminate river blindness by 2007.

Trachoma is one of the oldest known infectious diseases and is responsible for 15 per cent of the world's blindness. It is hoped that trachoma will be eliminated by 2020 through surgery, antibiotics, education, improved hygiene and access to clean water.

There are 1.5 million blind children in the world, mainly in Africa and Asia. A campaign to distribute vitamin A tablets and treatment is under way to prevent further cases of childhood blindness.

WHO is co-ordinating the Vision 2020 programme but not funding it. That will remain the responsibility of the charities. Simple operations, medicine and education would drastically reduce the incidence of blindness, which is costing $25 billion a year in lost productivity worldwide. ■

Patrick Lejtenyi/Gemini News Service

Not true

Nestlé has been warned by Britain's Advertising Standards Authority not to repeat its claims of an ethical policy over marketing of baby foods. In January the ASA said Nestlé must not repeat claims that even before the World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was introduced in 1981, Nestlé marketed infant formula ethically and responsibly and has done so ever since; that the Nestlé Charter concerns the company's commitment to the WHO International Code in developing countries; and that Nestlé do not provide free supplies of baby milk to hospitals for use with healthy infants.

Baby Milk Action asks anyone who finds Nestlé repeating these claims to contact them: Baby Milk Action 23 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX. Tel: 44 1223 464420 Fax: 44 1223 464417 e-mail: babymilkacti@gn.apc.org

For sale – Nestlé's global lies.

LACTOGEN
Infant formula with iron
力多精
嬰兒奶粉
NESTLÉ
母乳化
優
muruhuanai

JULIO ETCHART / STILL PICTURES

Cambodians pay for cheap seats

Sitting on wooden chairs marked 'Made in Vietnam' leaves little of Cambodia's forest standing, according to a report by Global Witness. In the last 30 years Cambodian forest cover has declined by 70 per cent and it is now a mere 30 per cent of land area. And much of the timber ends up as Vietnamese-made garden furniture sold throughout Europe – despite a log-export ban beginning in 1997. Many of these exports are also falsely labeled as environmentally friendly, claiming a tree is planted for every one cut down. The report concludes: 'By buying Vietnamese garden furniture consumers risk finding out that they are at best contributing to forest destruction in Vietnam, Malaysia, Burma and Laos... At worst there is a direct link between much of this garden furniture and the enriching of military warlords and the political élite in Cambodia.'

JEAN-LEO / PANOS PICTURES

For further information see: www.oneworld.org/globalwitness/

Whitest parliament

Australia's record in getting overseas-born citizens into Parliament is poor – despite its ethnic diversity. The country lags behind Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the US in ethnic representation in Parliament – 22.3 per cent of Australians were born overseas but they represent only 12.5 per cent of members of parliament, which is little changed from a decade ago. Migrants have been more successful at the local rather than the national level because ethnic communities are a significant voting block in local elections and are more unified over local issues. Only 4 per cent of federal politicians – nine MPs – were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, compared with 14 per cent of the population.

PENNY TWEEDIE / PANOS PICTURES

CISNEWS

Quote

'All I could think was: "My God! NATO is bombing us." I ran through the fields like a mouse.'

Dibran Asmani, Kosovo refugee,
on the elephantine power of NATO.

CHRIS STOWERS / PANOS PICTURES

Green cities

The balance has tipped. For the first time in human history most people in the world live in cities. What hope is there now of turning them green? **Vanessa Baird** investigates.

CALL me a pervert, but I have a soft spot for cities that others love to hate. Maybe it's because I was born in one – Brussels – and went on to live in two more: Lima and Athens.

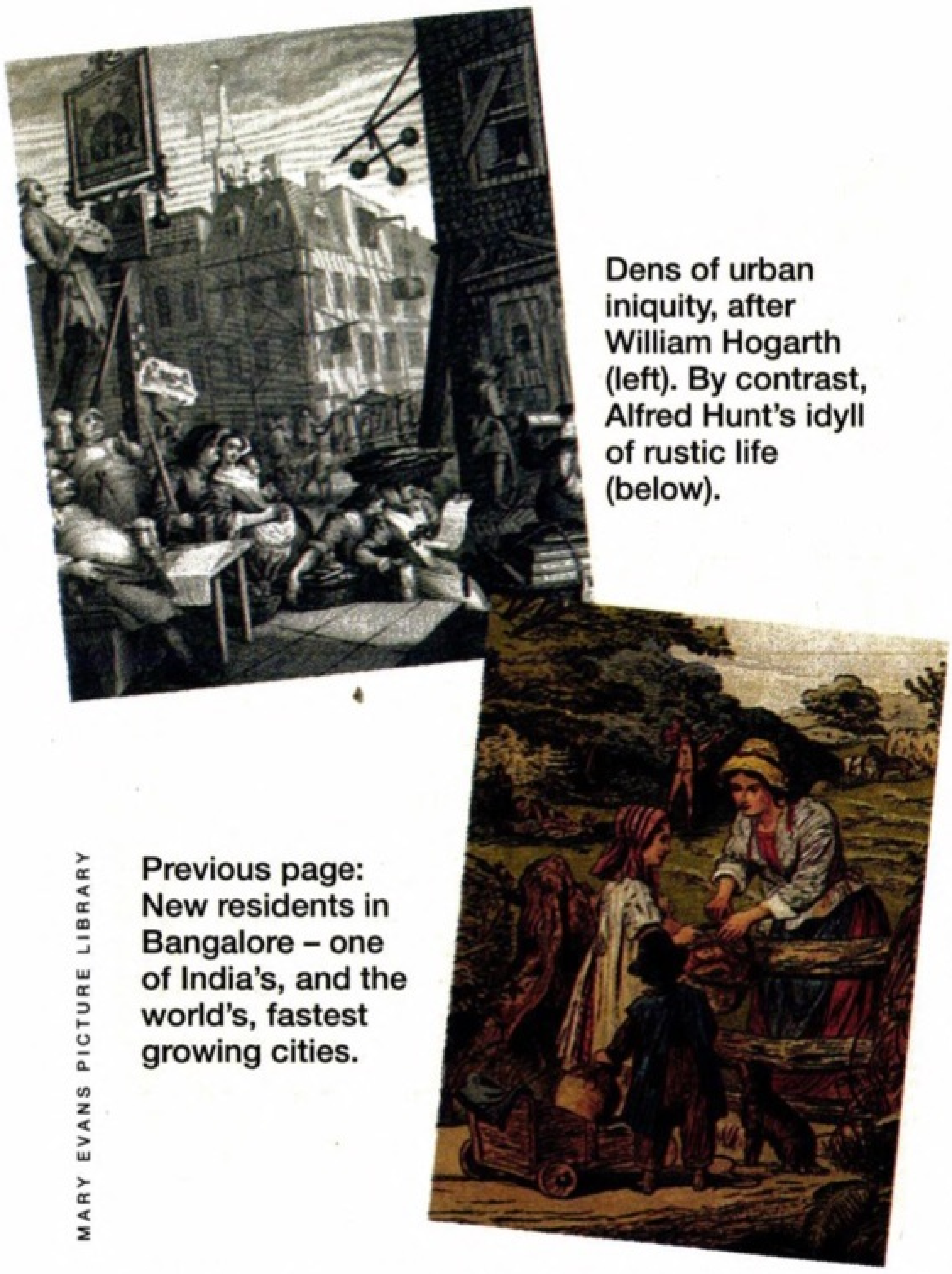
The latter two are especially maligned – unfairly I feel, and mainly by tetchy tourists resentful of having to pass through such hot, hectic and polluted metropoli to get to the stunning beauty of the Greek islands or the Peruvian Andes.

But I love the crowded cores of these cities with their particular dynamism and decay, their dirt and diversity, their smells and creative buzz. Their very impurity delights me.

Cities have long had a bad reputation. It's one of their charms.

'Loathsome centres of fornication and covetousness,' fulminated British writer and critic John Ruskin, on the subject of the 'great cities of the earth' in 1880. 'The smoke of their sin going into the face of heaven like the furnace of Sodom; and the pollution of it rotting and raging the bones and the souls of the peasant people around them..., ' he relished, intriguingly.[1]

Ruskin was following in a long tradition that saw the city as a place of moral



Dens of urban iniquity, after William Hogarth (left). By contrast, Alfred Hunt's idyll of rustic life (below).

MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

Previous page: New residents in Bangalore – one of India's, and the world's, fastest growing cities.

depravity, in contrast with the rustic virtues of the countryside. Cities represented chaos and disorder, threatening the natural order that the countryside affirmed. This was partly because they seemed to offer greater sexual freedom to both sexes, thus imperilling patriarchal values and the traditional family set-up.

Today, too, cities are seen as the greatest threat to the natural order of things. But this is not a metaphor for moralizers or bigots. It is literal.

The cities of the world consume 75 per cent of its resources and produce most of its waste.[2] Put bluntly, most big cities today are filthy parasites, which require the 'host' hinterland to provide them with food, water and energy, and depend on global forests, seas and the atmosphere to act as their dustbins. And they are the major contributors to the global warming that threatens human life on earth.

In the polite parlance of development circles, modern cities are 'unsustainable'. To be sustainable they would have to function in a way that did not damage the ecology for future generations; that ensured enough social equity in the city to prevent further environmental damage being done; and that did not overexploit or pollute the hinterland, be it within the same country or another.[3]

Should we abandon cities, retreat to the countryside and grow cabbages?

Meanwhile, the proportion of humans living in cities is growing. In 1900, just 15 per cent of the world's people were urban. Today it's more like 50 per cent. And by 2025 it's likely to be at least 60 per cent.[2] Many cities of the South are growing so fast that as soon as a census is completed it is already way out of date.

This is quite a problem because the big cities of debt-ridden Latin America, Africa and Asia cannot begin to keep pace with the ever-increasing demands made on housing, water, sanitation, energy, roads, health and education.

For their part, the cities of the North are growing much more slowly but are actually the main eco-culprits because their citizens are consuming ten times more per capita, and producing up to four times more trash, than their equivalents in the South.[4]

In the words of Herbert Girardet: 'The inherent selfishness of modern city-living makes urban growth a global cause of concern. Cities are giant abusers of Gaia and they have little awareness of the consequences of exploiting her.'[2]

So what should we do? Abandon cities? Retreat to the countryside and grow cabbages?

I don't think so. For inside the problem of cities lies the solution. The city – always the place of greatest dynamism and creativity – may also present the greatest opportunity for a greener future.

Utopians and anarchists

It is not the first time that cities have been diagnozed as pathological. A hundred years ago the unhealthy living conditions in the industrial city slums of Europe – and later North America – horrified social reformers.

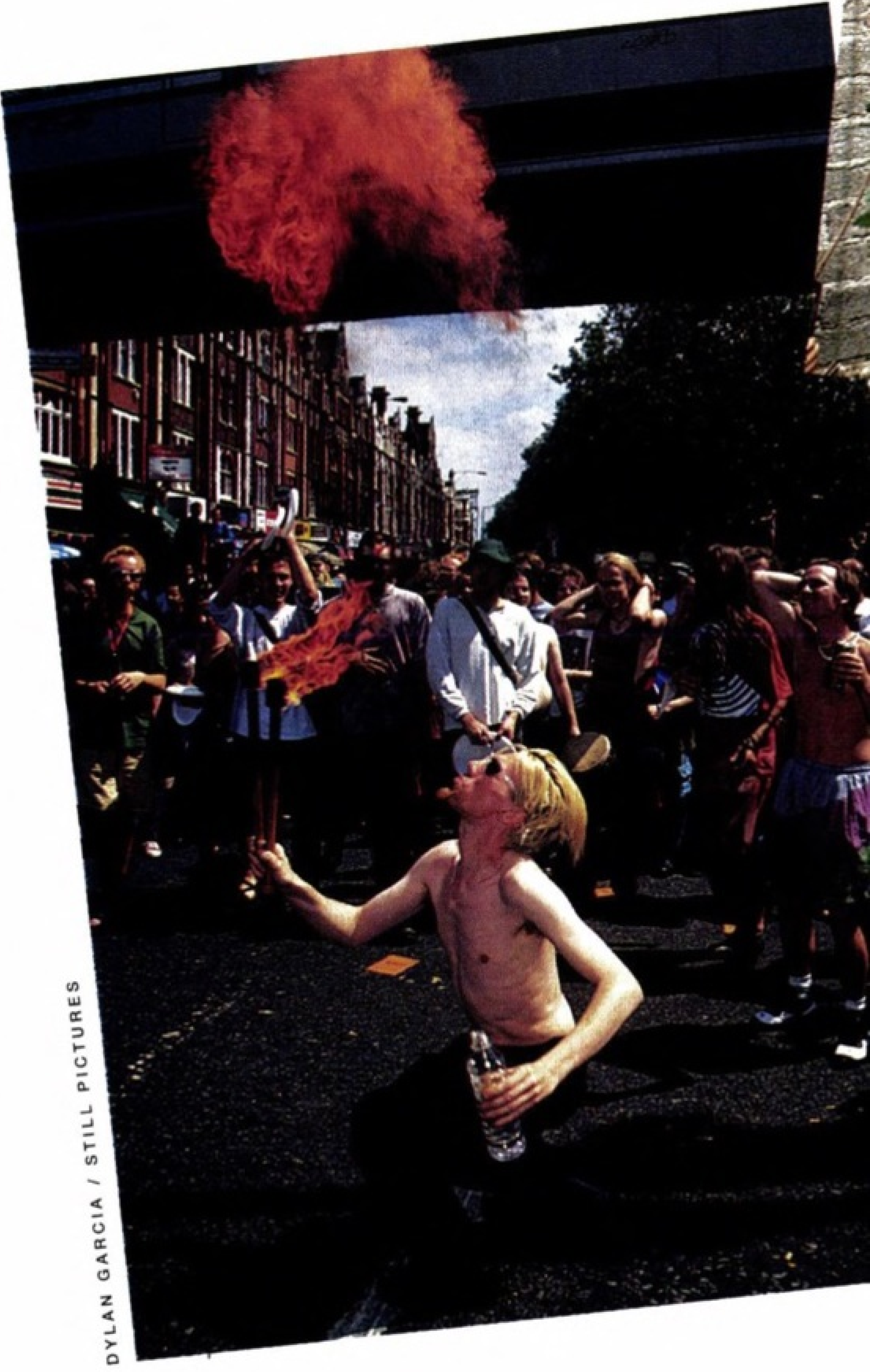
Vexed by the impoverished squalor of 1890s London, a court reporter and amateur Utopian named Ebenezer Howard came up with a visionary and lovingly detailed plan for what was probably the first 'green city' – the Garden City. He envisaged a series of new self-sufficient towns, built in the countryside, and surrounded by agricultural belts which would supply the inhabitants with food. The Garden City would have its own industry to provide local employment. People would be drawn away from the overcrowded big cities by the promise of a better life in such towns. Decades later, Howard's thinking was to be picked up on a large scale by 'new town' developers across the globe, from Letchworth to Lusaka, though it tended to lose its more idealistic and self-sufficient components along the way.

Howard basically believed big cities were doomed. So did the American 'father of suburbia' Frank Lloyd Wright. His 1930s dream was to replace them with spacious low-density housing, linked by highways. He assumed that each family would own a car. This prescient plan was to become the sprawling reality of post-War North America and much of the rest of the world. The Swiss architect Le Corbusier also put mass car ownership at the heart of his plan for a 'Radiant City'. But instead of sprawling cities he went for towering ones of high-rise geometric blocks set in open parkland traversed by great highways.

Though radically different in their visions, Howard, Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier had three things in common. All, in their way, wanted to open up more green spaces. All revealed a will to order; to segregate human functions into separate areas for living, for working, for shopping, for sport, for leisure. And finally, all were shamelessly Utopian.

Inspired by such ideas, post-War municipalities in Europe, North America, Australasia, Asia and Africa bulldozed swathes of big cities under the aegis of 'slum clearance'. In their place were thrown up segregated, alienated and soulless 'new towns'; sprawling, car-dependent suburbs of unrelenting monotony; and, that jewel in the crown of inappropriate planning, Corbusian tower-blocks built as social housing for low-income families with children. Clearly, no-one had sought to ask the

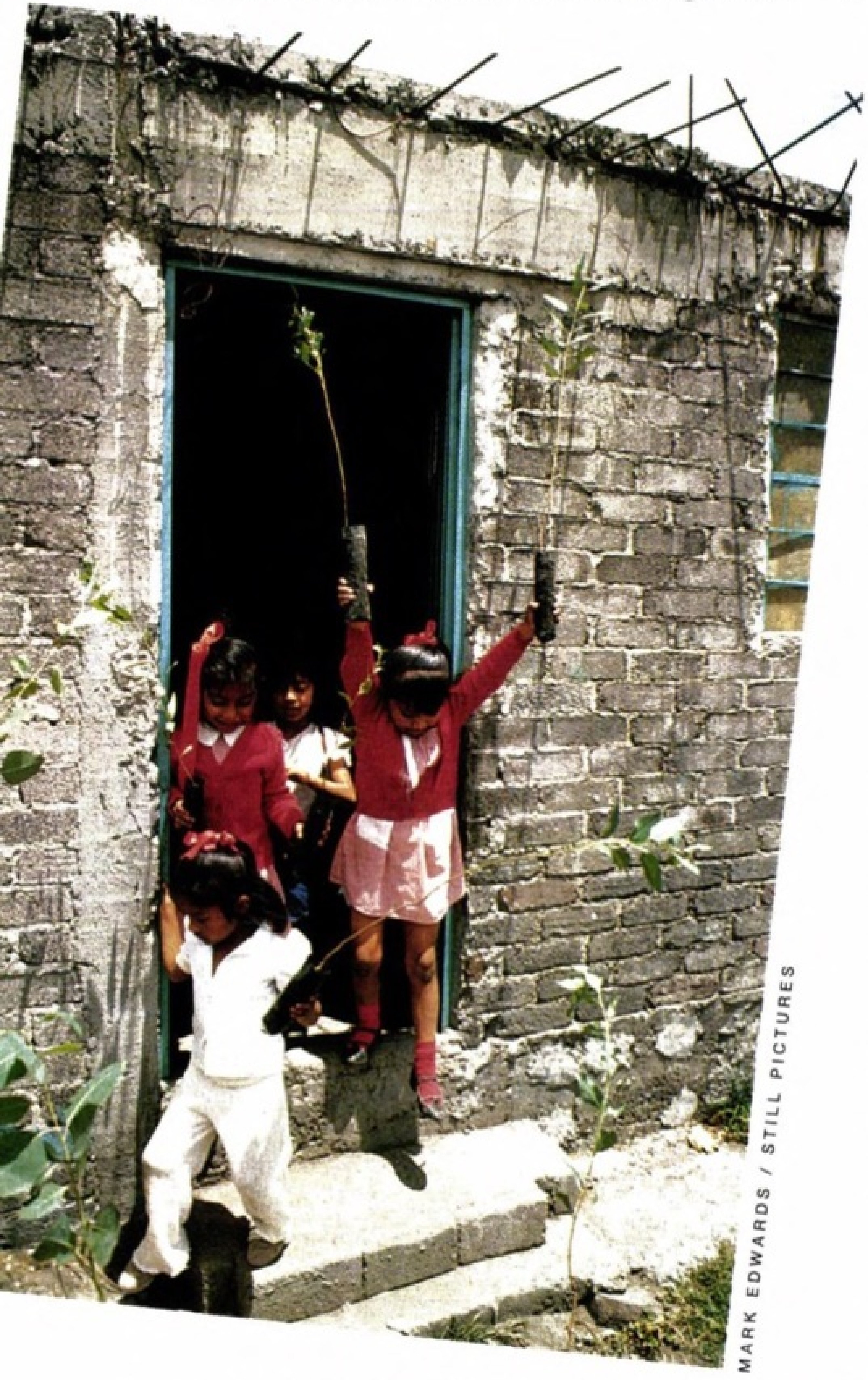
Below: London's citizens reclaim their streets from cars and corporations – for a few hours at least. Right: Mexico City schoolchildren join the struggle for urban survival, armed with seedling trees to plant.



DYLAN GARCIA / STILL PICTURES

people who were to live in these places what their real-life needs might be.

There was, predictably, a backlash. One of the fiercest critics was the North American Jane Jacobs, who in the 1960s took to task the Utopians and their followers in no uncertain terms.[5] Positively, Jacobs argued against segregation and uniformity and for variety and diversity to enable cities to retain their natural, organic vitality. Sidewalks were important social spaces where people could interact; older buildings gave character and should be repaired not replaced; and many of the areas designated as slums were vital, functioning communities that should be encouraged not demolished. Richard Sennett, another North American, praised the disorder of cities, saying that conflict was a necessary part of real, adult, urban creativity. He argued for an organic, anarchic, unplanned city.[6]



MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

Greenback city

But what Jacobs and others did not foresee was the role that corporate power would play in shaping cities as the politics of right-wing neo-liberalism took hold after the 1970s. As cultural critic Elizabeth Wilson has insightfully noted: 'Critical as we are of the disasters of Utopian planning we are in danger of forgetting that the unplanned city is still planned, equally undemocratically, by big business and the multinational corporation.'

She continues: 'Women, ethnic minorities and the working class in general have been caught between a paternalistic form of planning in which surveillance and regulation played a key role; and a profit-driven capital development that has been unbelievably destructive of urban space, and thus of supportive communities, killing whole cultures...'[7]

The result in the North has been development that is neither socially nor ecologically sustainable. To the cities of the South, globalization and neo-liberalism have brought something more: industrial pollution. Multinationals, always keen to find the cheapest labour and the fewest environmental restrictions, have shifted manufacturing to any poorer countries prepared to open their doors to them. This has enabled Northern cities to become greener – but at the expense of Southern ones.

The city of greenbacks is hardly equitable and rarely green

Nowhere is this more stark than in Mexico where at least 2,000 factories have been set up for the US market. The city of Nuevo Laredo is in the throes of a human and environmental disaster due to the arrival of foreign firms. Typhoid and tuberculosis are rife in the dozens of shanty towns that have attached themselves to the city, where workers and their families live without sewerage, running water or electricity. Across the world in Shenzen, China, the picture is not much brighter. There, in 1993, 81 workers making dolls for export died in a factory fire. The same fate met 188 Thai workers who were kept locked in a Bangkok toy factory while they worked.

Many municipalities in industrializing countries are reluctant to penalize corporations who ignore safety and environmental controls. In India, for example, the laws exist but the political will to impose them is often lacking.

But then the city of greenbacks is hardly equitable and rarely green, wherever it may be. As a symbol of gross corporate power and environmental indifference, Sears Tower in Chicago takes some beating. This monstrosity uses up more energy in 24 hours than an average US city of 150,000 people or an Indian city of more than a million inhabitants.'[3]

So how can we create greener, more sustainable cities without either imposing from on high hopelessly out-of-touch Utopian visions or allowing the free market to call all the shots?

Well, ironically, one answer may lie in human density itself. The notion of 'Compact Cities' combines the organic freedom Jacobs was advocating, with some clear municipal planning to protect public rather than corporate interests.

Living examples of how 'compact cities' can function exist in the centres of many historic European cities. But the proponents of 'compact cities' are quick to warn against 'romanticism'.[8] The sustainable city should not be rooted in some idealized version of past settlements, but in what is workable and relevant today.

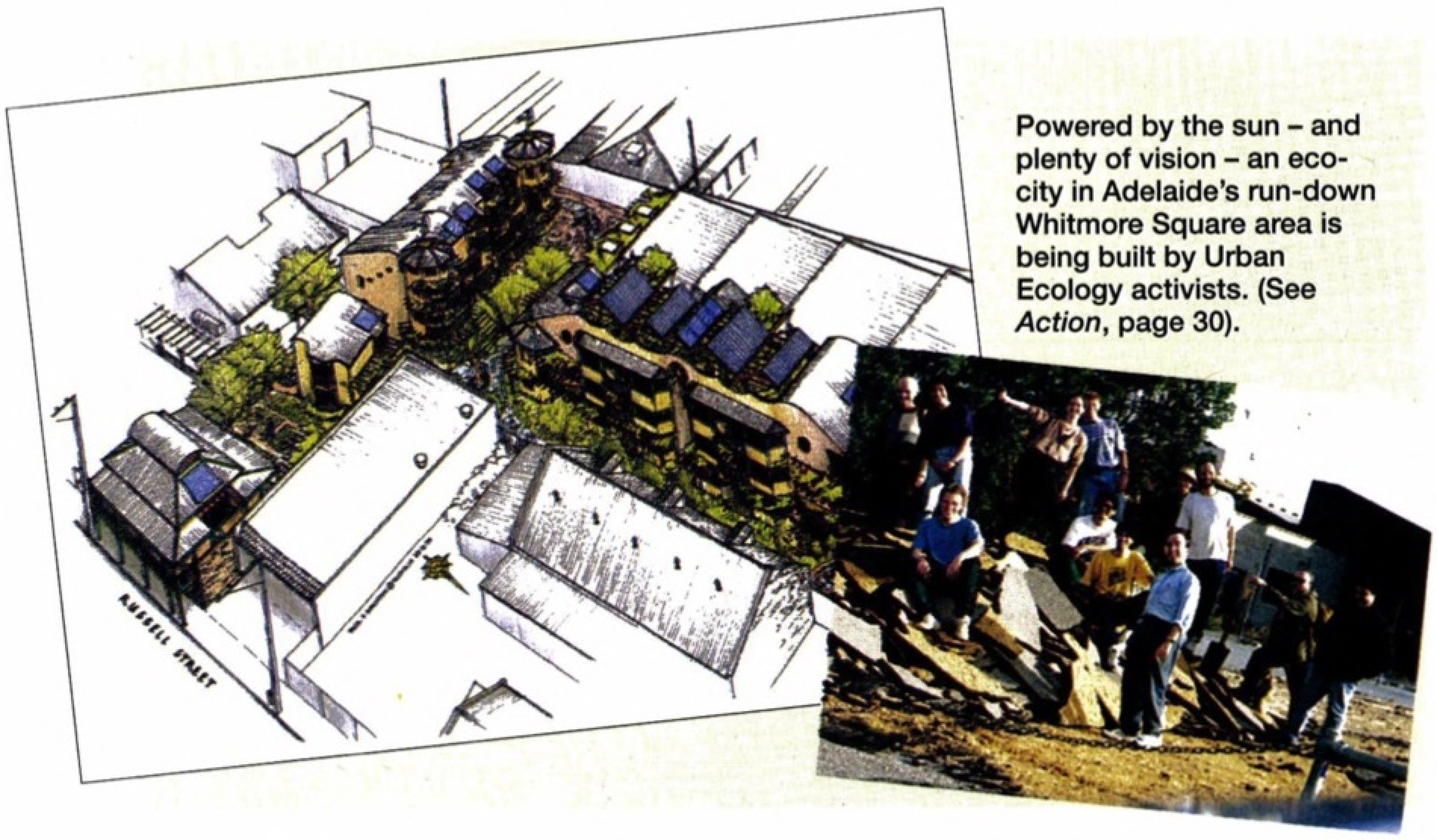
Cities where lots of people are together in a smaller area tend to be more dynamic and sociable than the sprawling ones. For architect, philosopher and environmentalist Paulo Solari, human density *is* the city. 'Life is where crowding is immense. Death comes when the system uncrowds... when the hyper-organism, the city, surrenders its makers and dwellers to the dimly alive pseudo-organism called suburbia... No eco-thinking can ignore the miracle of crowded living. To do so is to indulge in incoherent fantasizing. Worse, it is to betray Gaia.'[3]

Raindrops in Amsterdam: cities are magnets of diversity, drawing to them racial and other minorities.

MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

The environmental benefits of compact cities are clear and compelling: in the compact city, housing, workplaces and shops are either mixed or within easy reach of each other. If you can walk or cycle around your city, that reduces the need for air polluting, space-hogging motor vehicles. The needs of cars take up a third of the space of an average city. Supplemented by cheap, efficient and clean public transport, such as electric rail, the compact city could be virtually auto-free.

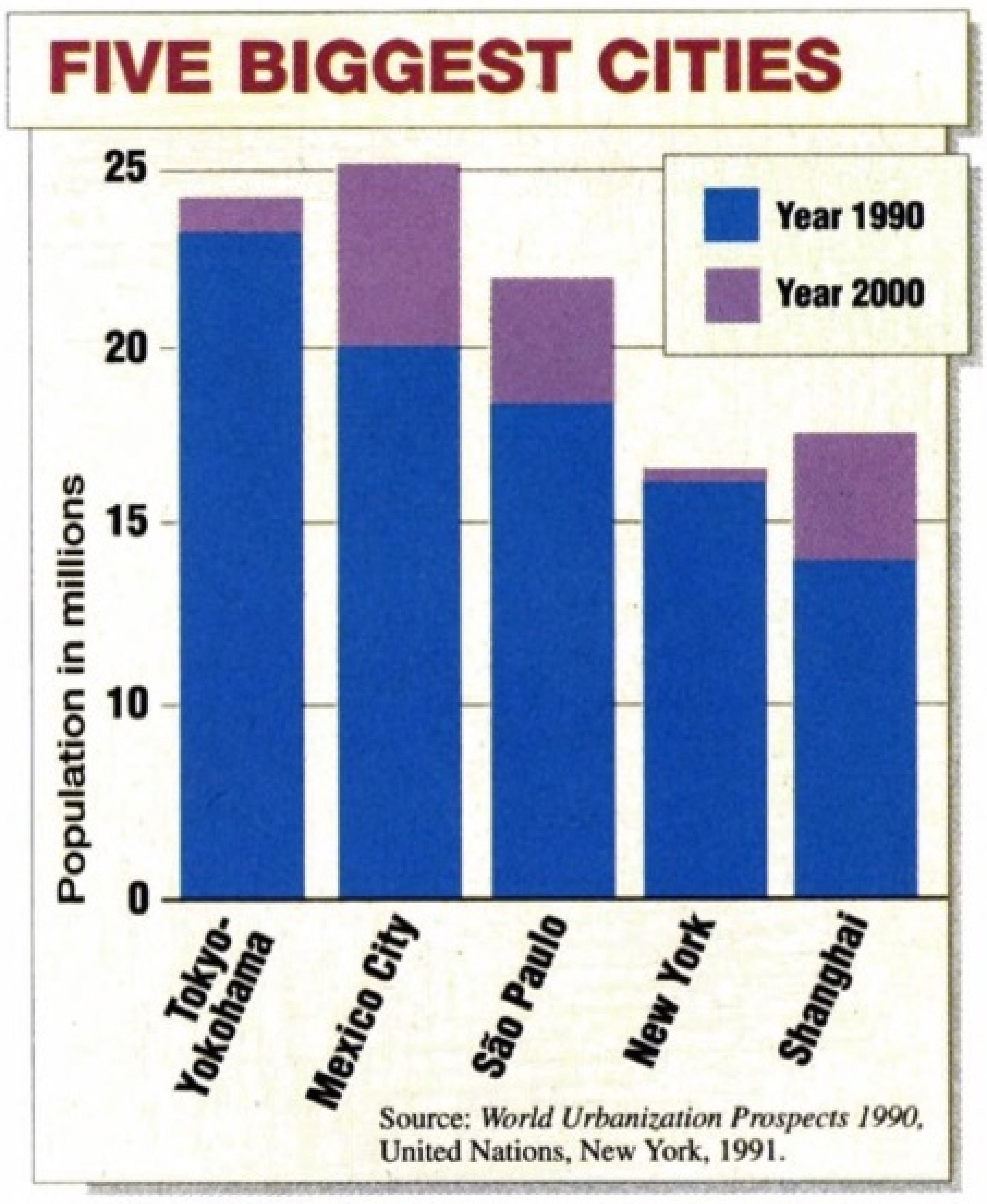
Compact cities use half as much energy and produce half as much air-pollution per capita as sprawling cities, taking into account climate differences. The dweller of a typical high-density Dutch city produces 10 tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution a year, compared with 20 tonnes produced by her Canadian equivalent in a typical low-density city.[3] This is partly due to reduced



Powered by the sun – and plenty of vision – an eco-city in Adelaide's run-down Whitmore Square area is being built by Urban Ecology activists. (See *Action*, page 30).

car use, but also because the closer together buildings are the more economic they are to heat. Health, emergency, education and other services are also cheaper to deliver than in a sprawling urban area. Even big cities can adopt the approach by planning compact sub-centres connected by good public transit.

So far, most research into the ecology of compact cities has centred on Europe. But the model could be applied to other parts of the world too – although it might involve challenging some cultural attitudes to space in, say, North America or Australia.



Source: *World Urbanization Prospects 1990*, United Nations, New York, 1991.

For the megacities of the Majority World, compactness could help in a number of ways. One of the main problems facing the cities of the South is the cost of infrastructure. Clean running water and sanitation is the most important factor in ensuring human health. But in a low-density spawling city it is much more expensive to provide. The same goes for public transport and energy. And the further power has to travel the more is wasted.

However, the current trend in Majority World cities is against compactness, notes Oxford researcher Rod Burgess. And in spite of their claims to be supporting 'sustainable development', the policies of the IMF and the World Bank are actually discouraging it.

The financial institutions still plug the line that the indebted countries must maximize their foreign exchange to pay off their debts and that the way to do this is to go for export-led growth. This usually involves creating sprawling export-processing zones and so forth.

Moreover, private car ownership is consistently promoted in the South as the glowing icon of progress, with disastrous consequences for cities. The civic authorities of Shanghai, not so long ago a cycle-city, are wedded to a plan to motorize seven million citizens within the next few years.

Whose city?

In spite of the benefits of the compact city, even its proponents are not pushing it as the great model for a 'green city'. Given the experience of big Utopian visions during the course of the twentieth century, maybe it's better that way. But that's not to discount the value of the many visionary small-scale projects that eco-activists are involved in around the world. The Whitmore Square Project in Adelaide is one such scheme (see above). Perhaps more useful than an overarching vision is a set of guiding principles for greener cities (see right). Working to turn cities green may also breathe life back into the spirit of 'citizenship' – something which ecologist and philosopher Murray Bookchin thinks we have lost.[9]

Our modern relationship with the city is, he says, pragmatic and material. He invokes the Middle Eastern 'sense of civic spirituality, the Greek feeling of political affiliation, the medieval endearment to communal fraternity', as examples of how it used to be.

But with growing environmental awareness 'ego-citizens' may be moving closer to being 'eco-citizens', to borrow the phrase of Greek cities researcher Voula Mega.[10] Local tree-planting or city-farming or simply recycling trash are all ways in which we can realize our 'eco-citizenship'. Local Agenda 21, which emerged out of the Rio Earth Summit, also enables communities around the world to start greening their environments – and demanding that local authorities and businesses clean up their acts too (see page 20).

A more confident and rebellious spirit is manifesting itself, whether it's citizens in Brazil protesting against local industries polluting their water, or swarms of cyclists bringing motor vehicles to a standstill as part of a 'Reclaim the Streets' action in Britain.

Cities have always been places of tremendous dynamism, difference and self-expression. Their relative freedom attracts ethnic, religious and other minorities; city air may be filthy but it tends to be more tolerant and receptive to change.

Increasingly, environmentally concerned citizens are finding that the best way to be effective is not to retreat to rural pastures green but to stay in their dirty old cities and change them from within. Here is the frontline of sustainability, where the environmental future will be lost or won, and where all citizens can grab a piece of the action. ■

What makes cities turn GREEN

◆ **Establishing greener** public transport – it reduces car dependence.

◆ **Decentralizing power** – green initiatives work better that way.

◆ **Self-building,** LETS and eco-jobs – they help tackle homelessness and unemployment.

◆ **Recycling** – it works!

◆ **Installing solar power** – it's getting cheaper all the time.

◆ **Building ecologically** – with materials that conserve energy.

◆ **Green accounting** – to include all eco-costs and benefits in city budgets.

◆ **Eco-monitoring** – to check global and local impacts of city's actions.

◆ **Communicating** – cities can learn from each other, nationally and internationally.

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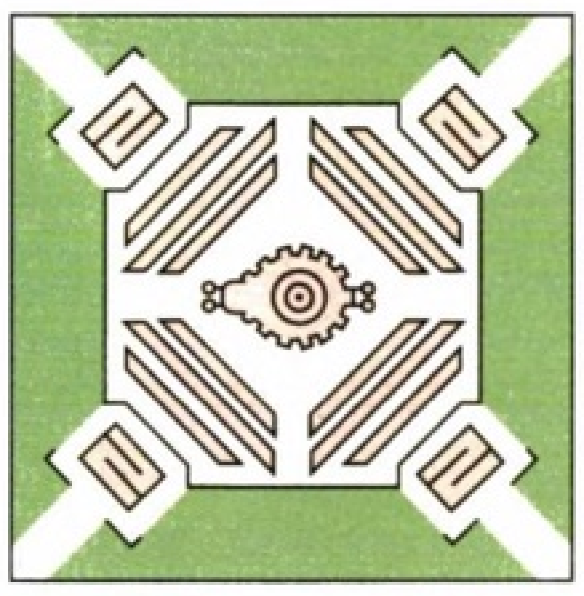
1 John Ruskin, 'Letters to the Clergy on the Lord's Prayer and the Church' (quoted in Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996) 2 Herbert Girardet, *The Gaia Atlas of Cities*, Gaia, London,1996. 3 Graham Haughton and Colin Hunter, *Sustainable Cities*, Jessica Kingsley, London and Bristol, Penn, 1994. 4 Wolfgang Sachs, *Greening the North*, Zed Books, London, 1998. 5 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Penguin, 1961. 6 Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, Faber, 1996. 7 Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*, Virago, London, 1991. 8 Mike Jenks, Elizabeth Burton, Katie Williams, *The Compact City*, E&FN Spon, London and New York, 1996. 9 Murray Bookchin, *From Urbanization to Cities*, Cassell, London and New York, 1995. 10 Voula Mega, Ed. David Satterthwaite, *Sustainable Cities: An Earthscan Reader*, Earthscan, London, 1999.

Shapes *of* CITIES

FROM TORONTO TO TIMBUKTU the shapes of cities vary quite dramatically. But why? Here are some attempts to explain and categorize the differences.

1



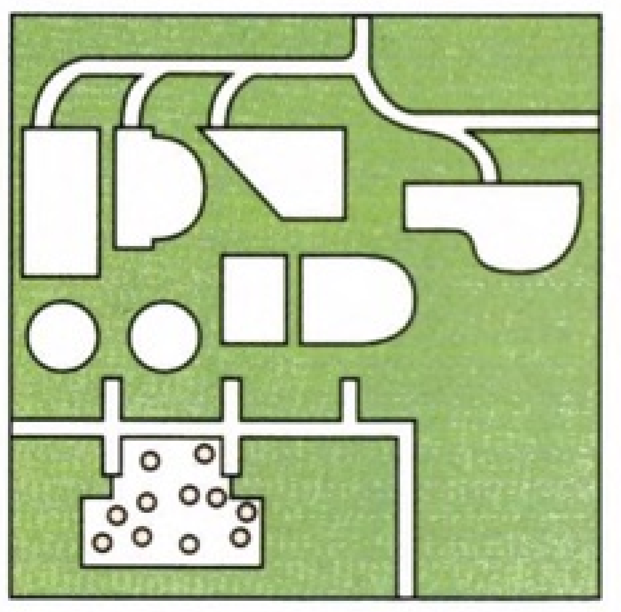
THE COSMIC (OR HOLY) CITY

THIS CITY REFLECTS beliefs about the universal and social order. Characteristic design features are a monumental axis – a temple, cathedral or citadel, for example – some dominant landmarks and reliance on a regular grid. Baroque 'ideal city' plans tend to fit this model.[1]

THE PRACTICAL CITY

2

THE DESIGN OF COLONIAL and company towns and the grid cities of the US are motivated by practicality.

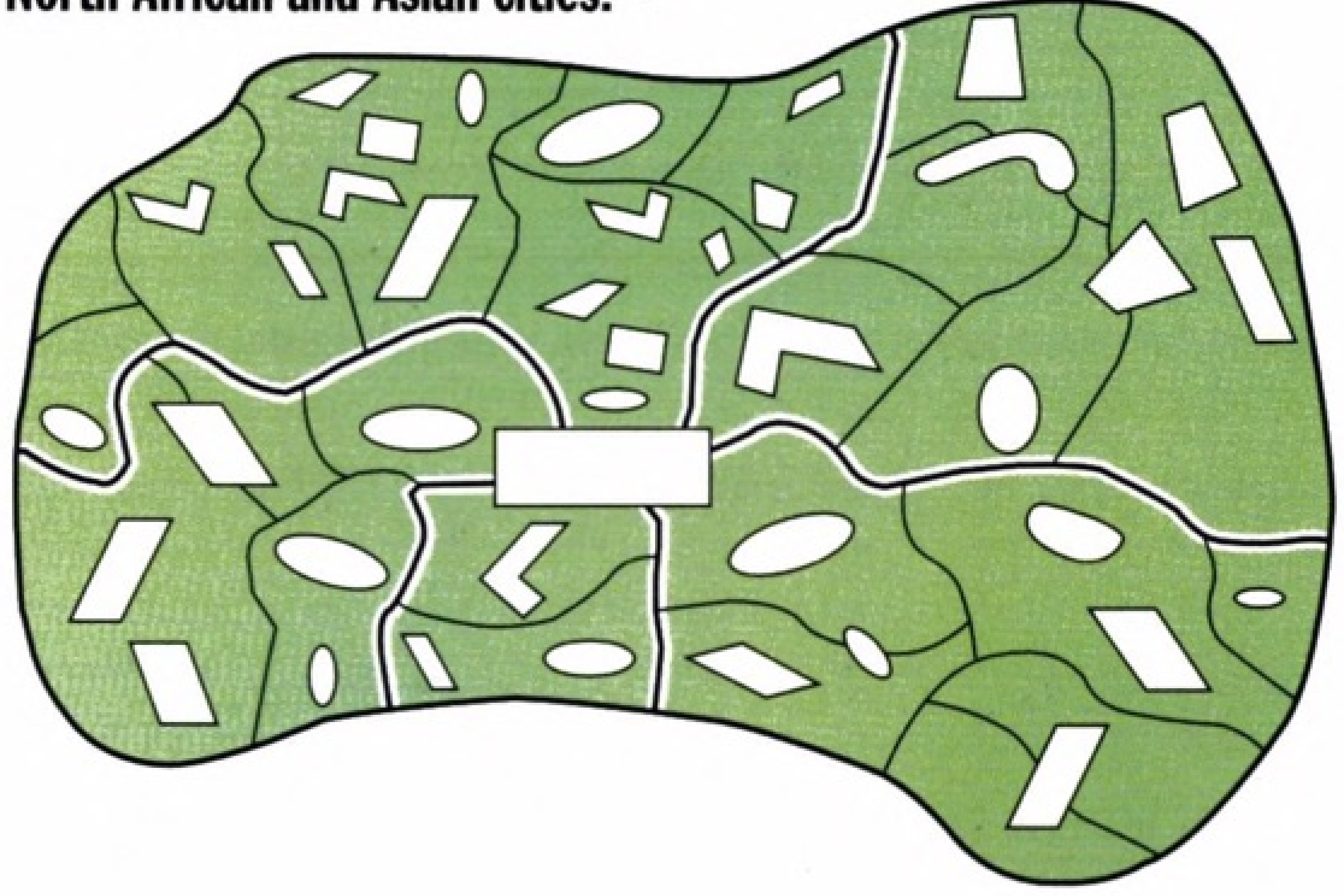


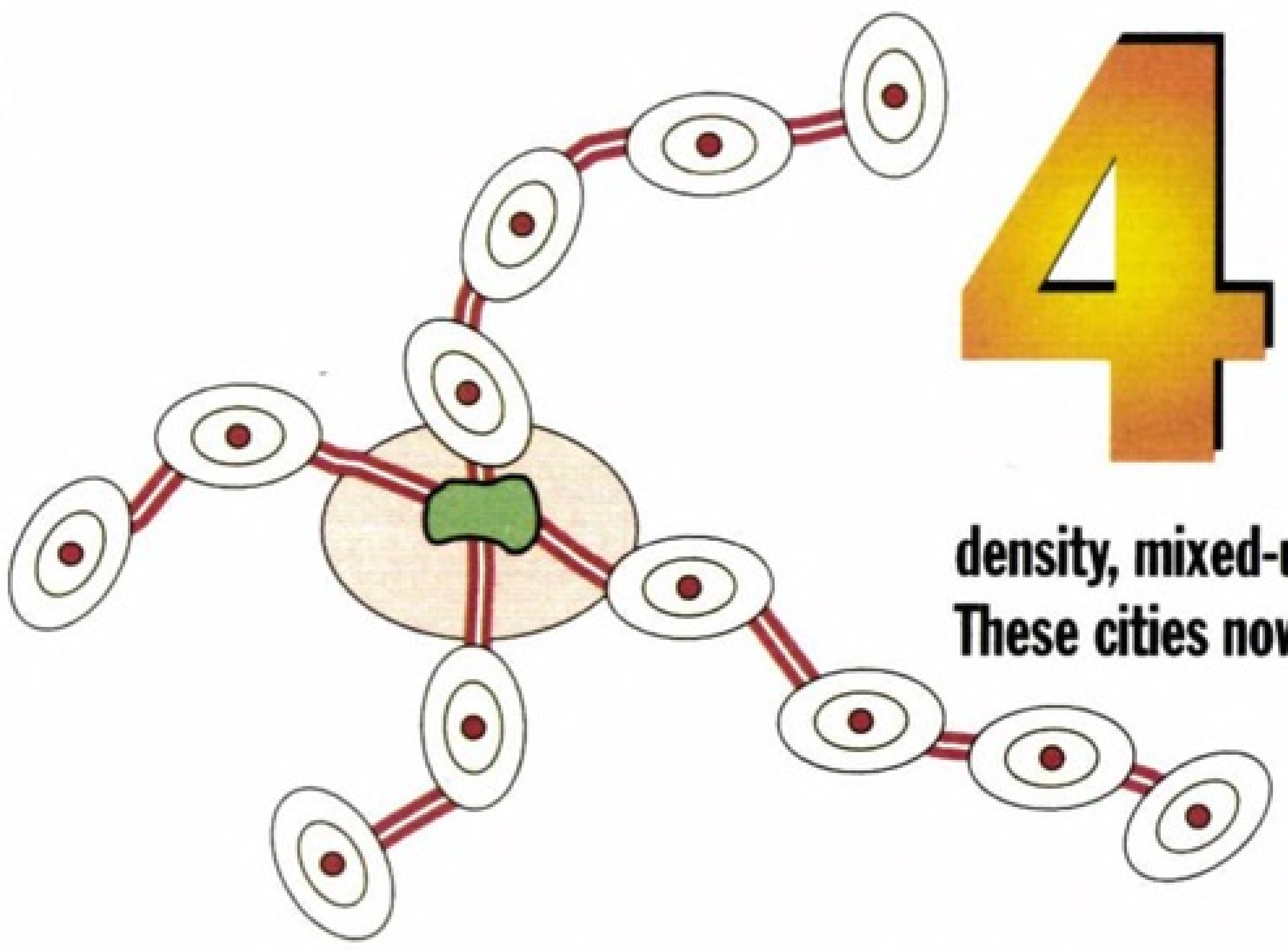
A city, according to this model, is made up of small autonomous parts linked together into a great machine which has clearly differentiated functions and motions.[1]

3

THE ORGANIC (OR WALKING) CITY

THIS CITY IS A LIVING THING, evolving in a natural way to fit the landscape. It has a definite boundary, an optimum size, and a cohesive individual internal structure. All destinations can be reached by foot in 30 minutes, and it is rarely more than five kilometres wide. This model is typical of medieval towns, and can still be found in the centres of older European and North African and Asian cities. [1, 2]





4

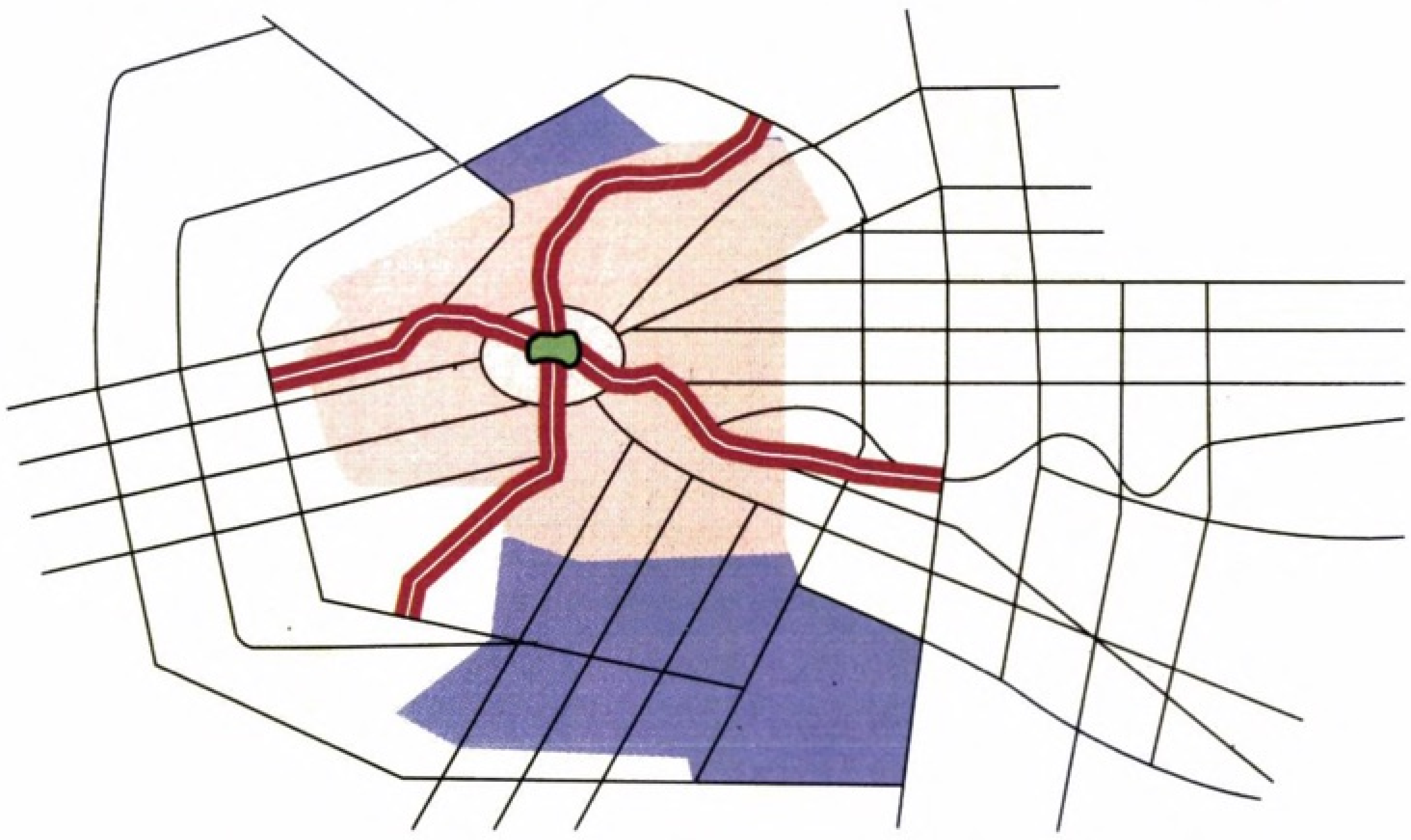
THE TRANSIT CITY

AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH century trains and trams allowed cities to expand outwards. Trains create sub-centres at train stations and trams generate development along their routes. The transit city tends to be a medium density, mixed-use city, with a dominant focus at the city core. These cities now spread 20 to 30 kilometres across.[2]

5

AUTOMOBILE CITY

THE GROWTH OF CAR use after 1945 made it possible to expand in all directions. Low-density suburbs house commuters, with separate zones for industry and commerce created by planners. The city is decentralized and dispersed and is typically 50 km or more wide. This model is very dominant in the world today.[2]



?6

FUTURE CITY?

THIS COULD BE MORE compact in nature, with mixed use of residential, commercial and small-scale industry. Apart from the city centre there would be sub-centres or nuclei, linked by an extensive and efficient network of public transit, reducing the need for car ownership and freeing up space for green amenities.[2]

Sources: 1 Kevin Lynch in *Good City Form*, 1981. 2 Adapted from Peter Newman, 'The Car, the Community and Quality of Life', Seminar Paper 1993, quoted in Joan Roelof's *Greening Cities.*

Green Odyssey

Angela Bischoff and **Tooker Gomberg** get on their bikes and set out across Southeast Asia in search of green cities.

WE'RE CITY KIDS. And just like most people in the Western world we grew up on a diet of stories dished up by the corporate media. The news of doom and gloom was getting us down, so we hit the road on an ecological odyssey we call Greenspiration. Our mission: to track down, document and share inspiring ecological stories. With our bicycles, laptop computer and video camera we first traversed North America. Then, aiming our handlebars eastward, we jetted to Japan and began a six-month odyssey in Southeast Asia.

JAPAN: Escalators for bicycles

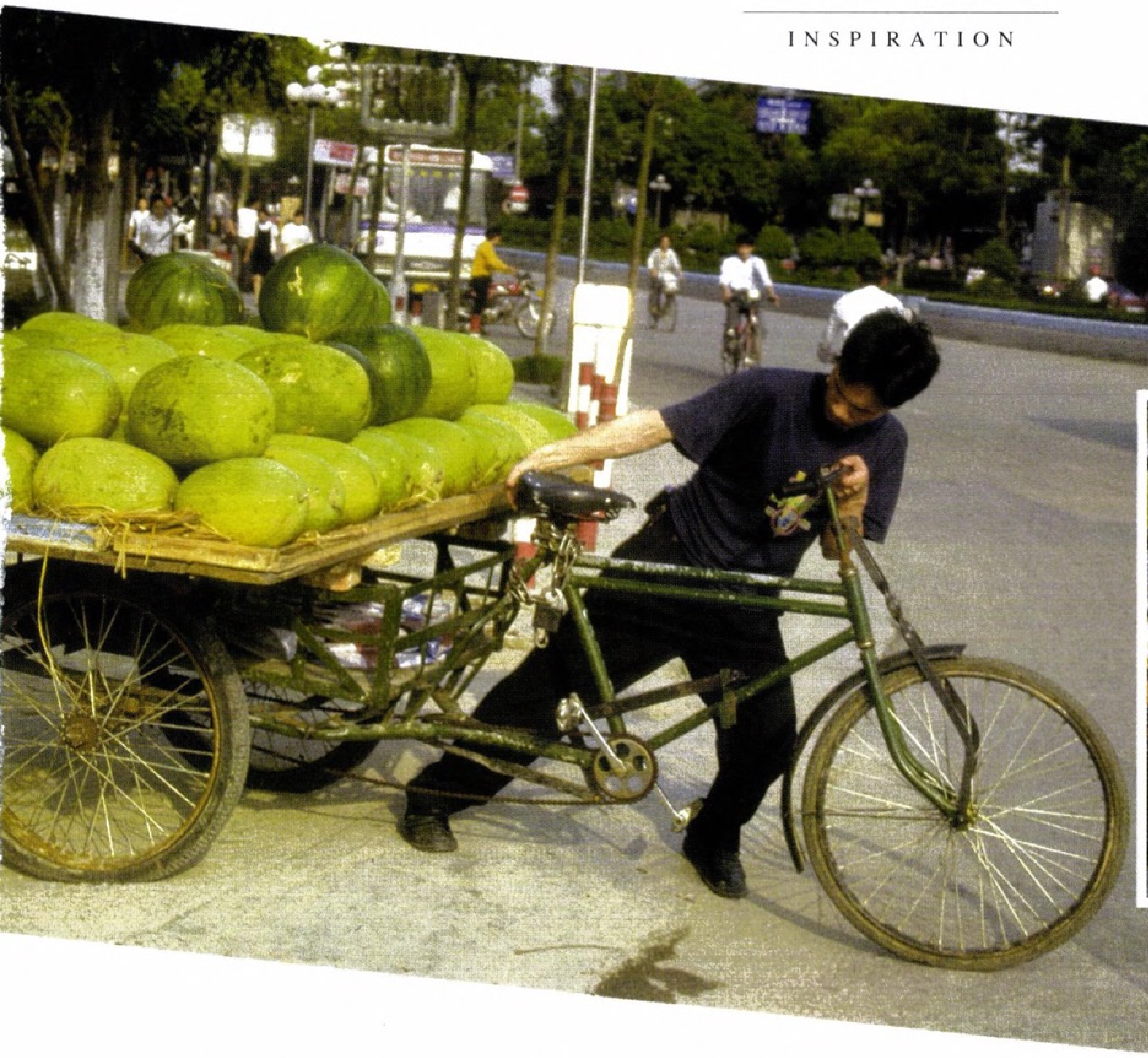
As Canadian bicycle activists from a country where less than one per cent of trips are made by bike, we were tickled to see Japanese of all ages riding *jitensha* (bikes) as if it were the most natural thing to do (it is!).

Multi-story bicycle-parking garages at many train stations protected thousands of cycles from the elements. Specially designed bicycle escalators – like magical moving carpets – made it easy for cyclists to climb stairs. Car traffic moved at bicycle speeds through narrow streets.

There's not much green space in Japanese urban communities. In Osaka we visited a gymnasium designed with a roof that doubled as a hill. This allowed for great savings in energy while creating a much-needed park within this dense city.

Kyoto is an ancient, beautiful city of a thousand temples and elaborate gardens. Nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains it retains much of its traditional charm. As host city for the international United Nations Climate Convention in 1997, it may be remembered as the place where 10,000 bleary-eyed delegates helped the world move away from the ecological brink. For the first time the global community agreed to limit our production of greenhouse gases.

We pondered the Japanese word *kiki*, or crisis. When written it contains two words: danger and opportunity. Global warming is



From bottom left to right: Ultra-green Hanoi cyclist; the authors overlooking Lamma Island power plant; bicycle as workhorse in Guangzhou, China; and pedestrian power on Lamma Island.

ALL PHOTOS: TOOKER GOMBERG

a looming crisis, but there is opportunity too – opportunity for bikes, urban agriculture, mass transit, conservation, renewable energy, local economics and green jobs.

We left the frenzied city life behind and hopped on a boat to the subtropical Amami islands in southwestern Japan. Grunting over mountain passes, we swooped through thick green forests that stretched unbroken to the sea. It seems unjust that these forests are intact while Japanese corporate giants like Daishowa and Mitsubishi clear-cut Canada's boreal forests for chopsticks and fax paper.

In the land of the rising sun much of the electricity comes from nuclear power. But we were impressed to see that almost every tenth roof was adorned with solar panels for hot water. The Japanese Government underwrites much of the cost.

TAIWAN: Slow boat, no hurry

After 36 hours rocking and rolling through the East China Sea from Okinawa, Japan, we were glad to touch land at the port of Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

Bikes and boats are a natural combination: neither are too fast, they're ecological, sociable and pleasingly relaxing. No need to unload the bike as you wheel it into the boat. Grab what you need, climb the stairs, and stare out at the endless blue horizon. Arriving at your destination you just untie the bike, roll down the ramp and presto – you're in the heart of the old city.

As we pedalled into Kaohsiung a pack of lawnmowers descended upon us – or at least that's what it sounded like. It was a horde of scooters, whizzing, belching, swarming and surrounding us. By the end of the day we were covered by a thin layer of grime from the unburned sooty fuel.

In the town of Chiku we visited a wetland slated to be transformed into an oil refinery and steel mill. If the project proceeds, the livelihoods of 20,000 fishers will be destroyed, as will much of the last remaining habitat of the black-faced spoonbill. Only 400 of these gorgeous, egret-like wading birds remain in the world, and three quarters of them winter here. Too bad spoonbills can't vote.

Being a vegetarian in Taiwan was a shock. As we roamed the bustling streets we were confronted with heaps of octopus tentacles, piles of dead frogs, boiling pools of entrails, and hanging carcasses. But vegetarian restaurants are also common. How do you recognize them? A swastika, believe it or not. To us it symbolizes evil and extermination. But Buddhists have been using the swastika – actually its mirror image – long before the Nazis appropriated it.

HONG KONG: Island of the walkers

Close your eyes and imagine your neighbourhood without all the cars. That's what we discovered on enchanted Lamma Island. It's just 40 minutes by ferry from Hong Kong. With a population of 6.5 million Hong Kong is the densest place on earth, jammed with towers shooting up like a bamboo forest.

Pedestrians in Hong Kong are herded off the street on to elevated walkways, jammed shoulder to shoulder in a heaving mob of humanity. Underground, during rush hour, a subway train snakes by every minute swallowing up thousands of people at a time. Sardines would find it cramped.

But there are signs of sanity. The most unusual but elegant of public conveyances is the pedestrian escalator to mid levels. From the centre of Hong Kong a series of covered, outdoor escalators snake up the mountain. Such conveyances – escalators – are common in private buildings. Hong Kong proves that they can work well in public spaces too.

The drone of the beehive fades into a hum as we escape on the breezy ferry ride to Lamma. As the boat pulls away a postcard downtown view of Hong Kong appears. Roughly translated, Hong Kong means 'fragrant harbour'. These days the fragrance is more likely to be a whiff of industrial effluent and sewage.

Down below in the not-so-fragrant water a small remnant population of bubblegum-pink dolphins slowly succumbs to the churn of boat propellers and pollution of their watery home. A couple of hundred still survive in the region, but their population is dropping precipitously by around 15 per cent each year.

As the ferry snuggles up to the pier on Lamma Island, the sound of shoes replaces the drone of cars. It is generously quiet. The only cars around are the toys that children play with. And no cars means lots of safe space for kids.

Over 7,000 people live on this hilly 14-square-kilometre island of scarlet hibiscus blossoms and towering banana plants. Clumps of jungle host hooting birds, moaning frogs, giant night snails and

From left to right: Through a swarm of butterflies in Vietnam's Cuc Phuong National Park; Hong Kong with its clean trams and escalators; cruel supper in Guangzhou, China; and curious, friendly kids everywhere.

butterflies. Handcarts haul heavy goods around. Stores and restaurants are serviced by the four-wheeled trolleys which can handle a thousand pounds, no sweat.

As the climate cooks and species disappear under pavement, it's a relief to know that without cars other things happen. Why not have car-free, island neighbourhoods within Western cities? With a mix of escalators, hand trolleys, shoe canvas, and wild green spaces our cities could be liveable again. We know it. We've walked there, and it's magic.

But even paradise has wrinkles. Three towers, each 70 storeys high, vent the exhaust from the mammoth coal-fired power plant. Three-and-a-half million tonnes of coal – 10,000 tonnes a day – are burned annually to supply electricity to Hong Kong. Now the utility is planning to expand, and perhaps also build an incinerator to burn garbage.

The challenge for Hong Kong and other industrializing countries is to leapfrog polluting, inefficient technologies and invest in energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that don't cost the earth. Many power companies around the world have switched on to a more sustainable path, allowing us all to breathe a little easier.

CHINA: Food for thought

Travelling by bicycle in China you are not alone. With a population of 1.2 billion, everybody seems to be riding. Often a single bike will have a couple and a child perched atop it. Towering piles of cardboard for recycling, huge bunches of cooking wood, and all manner of goods move around by pedal power.

While riding in Guangxi province in southern China, we noticed the absence of the cyclists' bane – chasing dogs. Here dogs are rarely pets – they are more likely to be dinner.

It was heart-wrenching to roam through the Qing Ping Market in Guangzhou (Canton), packed with live animals awaiting slaughter: some for sustenance, others for alleged medicinal power. Sixty-year-old turtles would be boiled for their shells and stomachs. Cats, rabbits, birds, snakes and beetles awaited their fate. Guangzhou people have a reputation of 'daring to eat anything'.

What really turned our stomachs was to see tiger paws, bear gall bladders and rhinoceros horns on sale as 'traditional medicines' – all highly illegal.

In the Chinese calendar this past year was the Year of the Tiger. With this glorious animal on the verge of extinction, now might be a good time to heed the wisdom of animal-rights organizations like Hong Kong's Earth Care. With so many species being pushed towards extinction Earth Care is promoting the use of herbal alternatives to replace animal parts' derivatives used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. And they maintain that herbal medicines are cheaper and more effective than those derived from animals.

Though we never actually saw the white dragon, we heard of its tale. The story goes that US satellites spotted a white line snaking through parts of China. After investigation it was shown to be a stream of Styrofoam litter along the main train line.

Polystyrene foam containers are a common nuisance worldwide: they cause pollution in their production, they are a waste of resources since they are used only once, they don't biodegrade for hundreds of years, and they release toxic gases when burned. The styrene may even be a health concern as it can leach out of the packaging and into human fat tissue.

The embarrassed Chinese officials decided to eliminate the problem by banning the use of Styrofoam take-out containers altogether. Production of alternative, disposable boxes made from bamboo, sugar cane stock, straw or hay is well underway. A dozen Chinese cities including Shanghai and Beijing have already banned the use of Styrofoam take-out food containers.

CHINA: New age for sewage

China is getting its shit together.

Throughout China biogas is actively encouraged by the state. In the southern

city of Yulin, Guangxi province, farming households are being equipped with biogas units. Each unit transforms human and pig waste into gas for cooking, lighting and heating water. Already 400,000 people use biogas in Guangxi province alone.

Each household, along with their four pigs, produces enough biogas for all its cooking, lighting and hot water. And since electricity is expensive, a biogas unit can save money. Biogas is a lot more convenient than other energy forms, such as collecting firewood for cooking. By using the biogas instead of wood, fewer trees are chopped down.

State employee Zhuo Youxing had this to say: 'Of course I am happy with the success of the project. I am serving the people.'

VIETNAM: War in the streets

The US military, during the war in Vietnam, inaugurated a new form of war. It became known as 'ecocide': they attempted to destroy the ecosystem by pouring massive quantities of herbicides from the sky to force peasants to abandon the countryside.

Three decades later, the battle against nature continues. Now the war is in the cities: cities which survived decades of war are now suffering under a pallor of exhaust. The streets of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are being strangled, slowly, by aggressive, honking motorized vehicles. One might call it 'urbicide'.

Early in the morning, the streets are so calm you can hear birds singing from cages hanging in the trees. By 8 am, under the shady trees of the Old Quarter, the streets are full to capacity as activity bursts forth. Motorcycles are everywhere, weaving, accelerating, and swerving within a hair's breadth of each other.

Through this anarchic traffic jumble, cone-hatted women amble carrying bouncing baskets of bananas and pineapples, bread, or ready-to-eat sticky rice, and more. Everything glides by in woven bamboo baskets elegantly balanced on a bamboo pole. It gives a whole new meaning to the concept of shopping: instead of going somewhere for the goods, the 'basket of goods' comes to you.

Make-shift restaurants, complete with a few stackable stools and a coal-fired stove, line the sidewalks. Kids play soccer, weaving around the pedestrians. Peddlers hone in on tourists, trying to sell postcards or army-green pith helmets.

Another type of peddler pushes a ride in a cyclo – the ubiquitous, three-wheeled, pedal-powered taxi. This unique Vietnamese vehicle is custom-made in small shops around the country. It is a popular mode of transport for tourists and locals alike. And when required, a cyclo can as easily be used for transporting large, bulky and heavy freight.

But everybody seems to want a motorbike. One of the more popular brands is the Honda Dream. But with everybody driving their Dream, the city is turning into a nightmare.

Not everyone is happy with the rapid motorization. Nguyen Linh, of the Vietnam Women's Union, told us: 'Many people feel regret with the current situation that the Vietnamese are forgetting the bicycle... Many people miss the romantic past; it was quieter and less polluted. And of course, bicycles are good for the environment.'

It is hard to imagine what Hanoi was like just five years ago when there were virtually no motorcycles. Or ten years ago when streetcars still plied the leafy boulevards.

In the countryside, the bicycle is still commonly used. Once we rode in a special lane reserved for bicycles and water buffalo. They may have horns, but at least they don't honk.

Piecing it together

We witnessed the tragedy of millions of motorcycles roaring down Asian streets and sickening the atmosphere. We pondered upon the last of the tigers' paws being taken from the wild and sold in Chinese markets.

On the other hand we found powerful and inspiring initiatives that the over-industrialized world can learn from. If the bicycle can play such a prominent role in Osaka, why not in Mexico City? How about biogas for Boston or London?

We were touched most deeply by the persistent generosity we received. Although we were strangers as we pedalled through Asia, peasants would freeze and then try to talk to us or write things down in characters we could not understand. But with some pointing, laughter, and patience we were able to bridge barriers of language and culture.

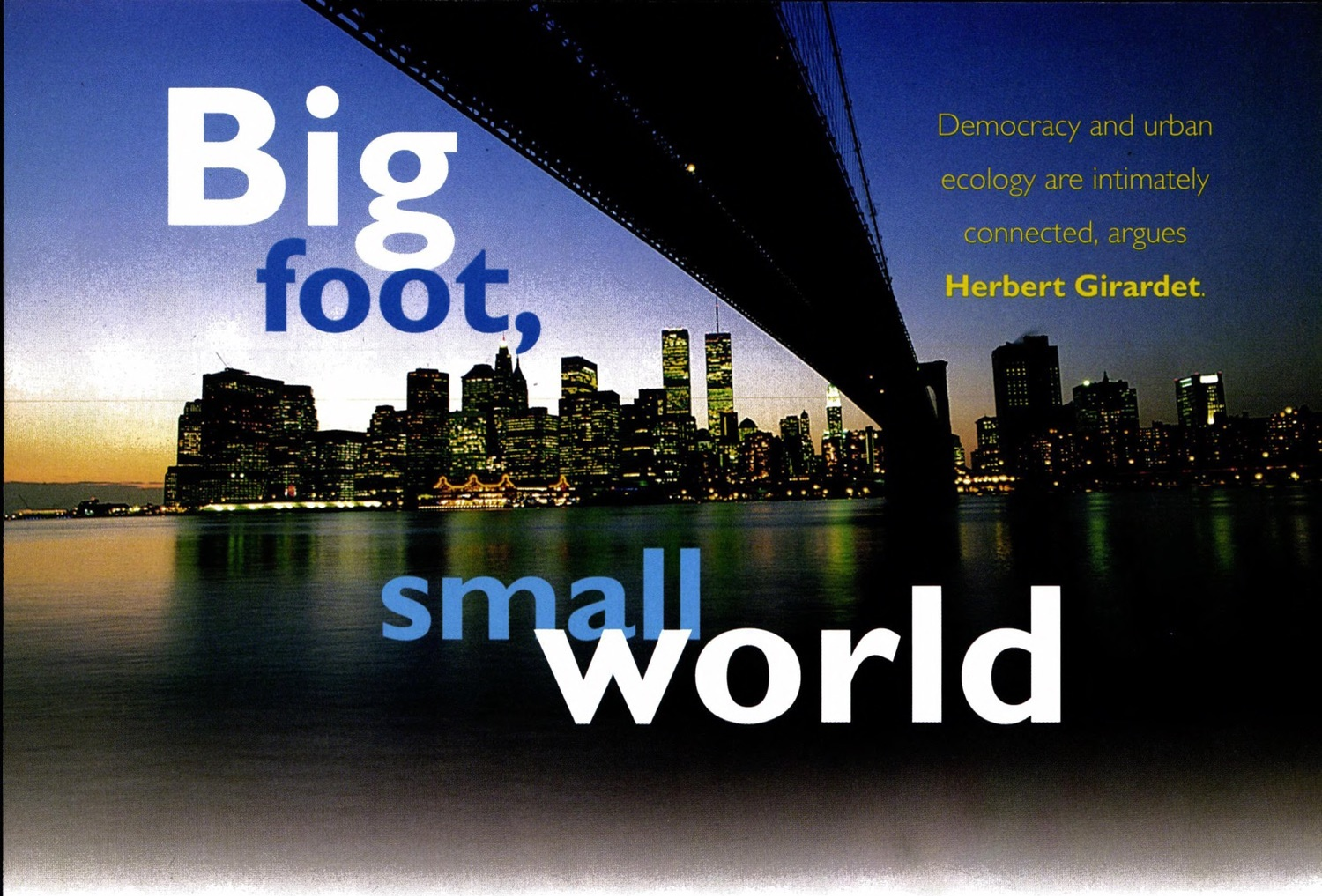
Intuitively, people wanted to be helpful. Perhaps, as we all become aware of the damage we are doing to our home planet, such generosity will blossom. And if we learn from each other's innovation and creativity, the pieces of a whole and healthy planet can fall into place. ■

Angela Bischoff and **Tooker Gomberg** live in Edmonton. They are currently traversing Canada on a millennial Greenspiration Odyssey. You can reach them at: greenspi@web.net and read their exploits at: www.greenspiration.org

ALL PHOTOS: TOOKER GOMBERG

Big foot, small world

Democracy and urban ecology are intimately connected, argues **Herbert Girardet**.



CHRIS STOWERS / PANOS PICTURES

Twelve years ago, when filming a documentary, I saw a huge stack of mahogany being loaded on to a freighter at the port of Belém in the mouth of the Amazon. It had London stamped on it in large letters. It was then that I started taking an interest in the environmental impact of modern cities: the resources they take from the earth and the wastes they discharge into the global environment.

A few years ago the term 'urban ecology' started to emerge in magazine articles, books and TV programmes. Initially studies focused on ways to create healthy and pleasant urban environments, with clean water and air, green urban spaces for people to enjoy, and ample room for urban wildlife. Then some authors started pointing out that enhancing urban environmental conditions is also an issue of social justice: that the poorest, typically, live in the most polluted and most crowded urban areas, usually with very little green space available to them.

Urban ecologists started concerning themselves with children growing up in polluted environments. In Mexico City, for instance, children in art classes were found painting pictures in which the sky was coloured black rather than blue. Not surprisingly, doctors also discovered that respiratory diseases in such environments had reached unprecedented levels. Responding to popular demand, a vigorous popular movement for creating healthy cities was started in many countries, with the aim of cleaning up exhaust fumes from motor cars, reducing car access, banning polluting factories, improving sanitary conditions, particularly in the exploding cities of developing countries. Urban ecology was a frame of reference for much of this innovation.

Over the last few years the term has gradually acquired additional layers of meaning. Today it is no longer just concerned with 'internal' urban environments and the pollution city people are exposed to, but increasingly with the impact of cities on the global environments from which they draw their resources and into which they discharge their wastes. As developing countries continue down the road of rapid urban-industrial growth and of increased living standards, per-capita demand for land may well outstrip the amount available for urban needs.

The concept of the 'ecological footprint' of cities originated from research by the Canadian ecologist William Rees. He defined it as the surface areas required to feed cities, to supply them with forest products and to reabsorb their wastes, and particularly their output of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuel burning. I have examined the ecological footprint of London, where I live: it equals the UK's entire area of productive land, around 125 times London's own surface area, a total of 19.7 million hectares. Rees established that European citizens average an ecological footprint of some three hectares, whereas North Americans require between four and five. Yet, worldwide, only one-and-a-half hectares of productive land is available per person.

New prints

As the cities of the South grow exponentially they, like the cities of the North, are beginning to create their own ecological footprints.

In the early stages of growth the impact is mainly local. A friend, who is a pilot, recently described how when flying over African cities he kept seeing ever-widening rings of denuded, treeless land surrounding them. As people from rural areas, used to burning firewood and charcoal, become city dwellers they continue using these local energy sources as long as they can.

But as cities grow larger and as firewood becomes more difficult to obtain, people get used to burning coal, kerosene or gas, often shipped in from thousands of miles away. Individual fuel consumption invariably soars. In India and China it has been found that as people move to cities from rural areas they increase their per-capita energy use by some 45 per cent as they get used to motorized transport, electric lighting, cooking with kerosene and the like.

Urban agriculture is also going through changes. In African cities farming has always been a common feature of urban life. The Ghanaian capital of Accra, for instance, is permeated by vegetable patches and chicken runs – on wasteland, on the side of roads, even in parks. People moving in from the countryside also bring goats and sheep with them.

Left: Each New Yorker leaves a four-hectare ecological footprint. Above: Many Chinese cities still grow most of the food they need.

CAROLINE PENN / PANOS PICTURES

In a bid to modernize the city the mayor of Accra, Nat Nun-Amarteifio, had wanted to remove the urban growers and the hawkers from the city until his wife pointed out to him: 'People have got to make a living. Let them be. Give them a role in the city's life, make them feel that they are useful and they will be useful.'

Luckily, Nat followed her advice and allowed the activities of urban farmers and hawkers to be formally recognized. Accra has further benefited from a decentralization of power to local-community assemblies and grassroots initiatives, assuring an active democratic system that has brought decision-making and responsibility closer to the people.

The new Government of South Africa has also recognized the social and environmental benefits of encouraging urban agriculture, especially amongst the poorest people. During the Apartheid regime it was outlawed, as part of the strategy to make sure that Black South Africans did not get a foothold on the land. Today, especially in the squatter settlements, it is encouraged and flourishing.

Generally the global trend is not so positive. Take the example of China. Chinese cities are famously self-sufficient in food; Beijing administers an area of farmland the size of Belgium which supplies grain, poultry, pork, carp, fruit and vegetables. Urban farmers in China have always utilized the great variety of fertile materials they found in cities, meticulously recycling and composting human and animal wastes. But even Chinese cities are now beginning to follow Western patterns. Globalization is leading to more and more food being imported – grain from Kansas, for example, or soya from Mato Grosso. The erosion of food self-sufficiency in the cities of the world's most populous nation represents a serious blow to global sustainability, and the appearance of increasingly large and heavy footprints on a fragile planet.

Democratic ecology

It's no good pretending that greening cities is a simple issue; there are so many different factors to be taken into account. But one thing is clear: you can't have a sustainable world without urban sustainability. And there can be no sustainability without an active urban democracy.

That means enabling all sectors of society to participate in the life of a city. Sometimes the very poorest people will have most to offer in terms of creating urban sustainability. The role that Zaballeen waste recyclers of Cairo play in keeping the city clean is now at last officially recognized. Not only do they separate and recycle paper and plastic waste, they also turn organic wastes into compost for urban-fringe agriculture.

But in many parts of the world the urban poor are seen only as an obstacle and the way they are treated by municipal authorities can make cities even less sustainable. For example, Mumbai (Bombay) squatter settlements keep being razed by municipal authorities, often on behalf of commercial developers.

The inhabitants are then relocated to the very outskirts. This means they have to travel long distances to get to the city in which they eke out their living, burning fuel and causing much pollution as a consequence.

Throughout the world new techniques for invigorating local democracy are being developed, especially under the auspices of Agenda 21 which emerged out of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. But one shining example began several years earlier. In the US city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, public 'visioning exercises' were initiated in 1984 and used to great effect. Chattanooga is a 'first generation' industrial city that lost most of its businesses in the 1960s. Initiated by the city authorities, the Chattanooga Venture involved the community in an exercise to reinvent the declining and polluted city.

As part of 'Vision 2000' 1,700 people were asked to express their hopes for the future and to formulate practical goals for reviving their city. Through a variety of public and private partnerships 790 million dollars were raised.

Today Chattanooga is recognized as a leading 'Environment City' in which good housing has been achieved for all, and where new environmental industries, including an exemplary waste-recycling system, have created many new jobs. All along the emphasis was on making linkages between environmental, social and economic sustainability.

We need to revive the vision of cities as places of democracy and conviviality and above all else of 'settled' living. This means creating more local lifestyles within and around cities themselves, focusing on the concept of the urban village within the city, where community living and the recreation of local economies can be a reality.

In American cities the creation of no fewer than 2,400 farmers' markets over the last ten years is an intriguing example of re-establishing linkages between people and the local countryside. It will take the ingenuity and active collaboration of planners, architects and urban citizens to insure that lively, varied, convivial and safe urban environments are created that supersede the era of urban sprawl, pollution and dereliction. ■

Herbert Girardet is a documentary filmmaker and author of several books including the *Gaia Atlas of Cities*.

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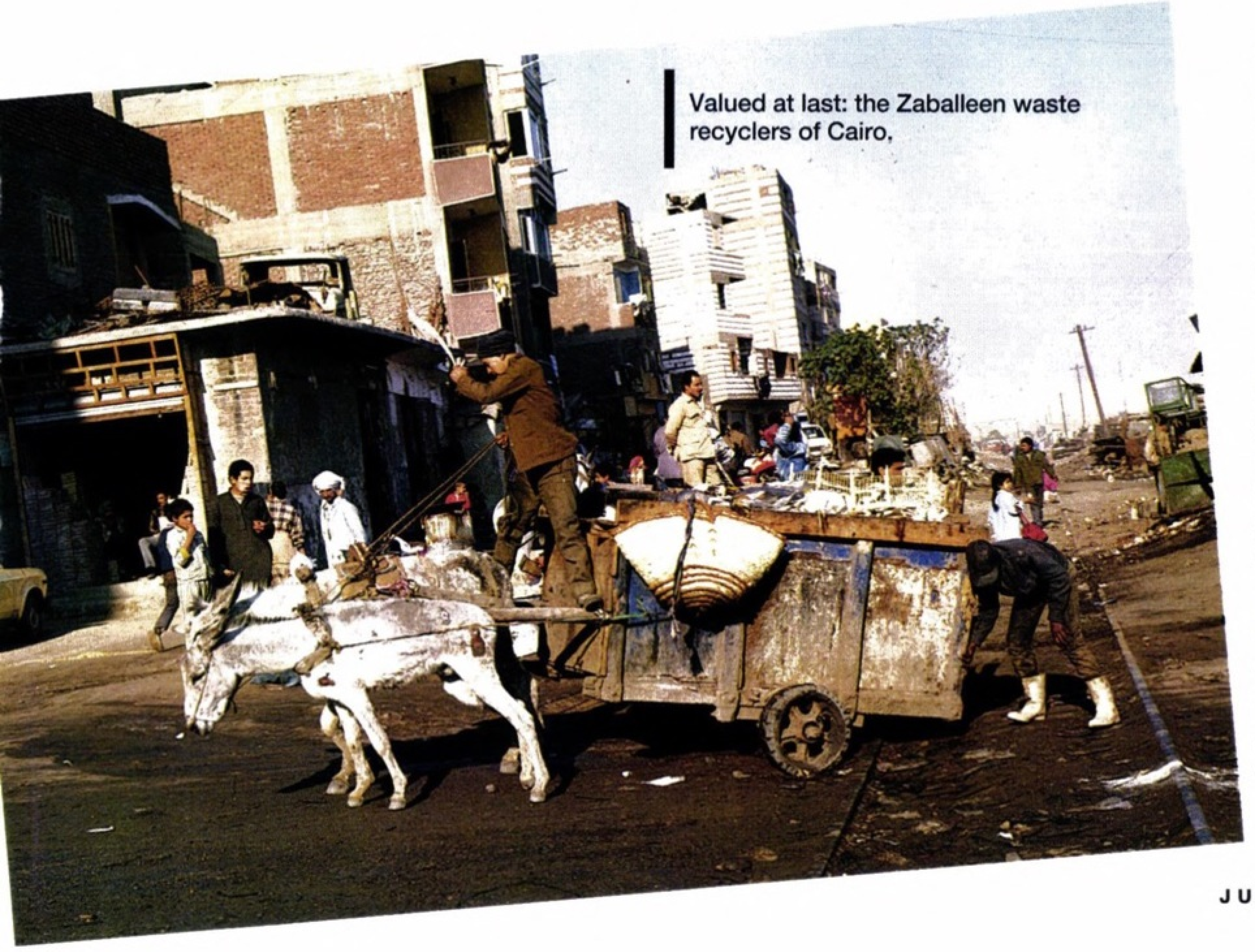


Valued at last: the Zaballeen waste recyclers of Cairo,

CHRIS CALDICOTT / PANOS PICTURES

Cities

THE WAY CITIES ARE...

AIR QUALITY

A fifth of the world's population live in cities where the air is not fit to breathe. Burning coal and oil is the main cause. This produces emissions of carbon that contribute to global warming, sulphur dioxide that causes smog, and nitrogen oxide that creates a noxious haze, which covers cities and eats into human lung and plant tissue. Air pollution in Mexico City exceeds safety limits six-fold, but the big cities with the worst air quality are Milan, Tehran, Beijing, Calcutta, Delhi and Jakarta.[1]

ENERGY

Cities, directly and indirectly, are responsible for the bulk of the planet's energy consumption. They account for 80 per cent of world use of fossil fuels. Much energy (over 70 per cent in the case of electricity) is wasted in the process of its generation and transportation. But much is also wasted in the running of buildings and private cars.[1]

FOOD

Every day hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food are transported from rural areas to the world's cities. Big meat-eating habits are especially damaging to the environment. To support one Sydney citizen on a diet rich in meat, milk and wheat requires 1.12 hectares – twice as much as a Hong Kong dweller needs for their diet.[1]

TRANSPORT

Cars take up a third of city space and produce much of its air pollution. In Los Angeles 90 per cent of commuters drive to work, taking up 50 times more road space than if they were travelling by bus. In Athens 80 per cent of air pollution is due to traffic.[2] Traffic congestion is also very inefficient. In Lima the speed of rush hour traffic is 5.9 kph; in London and Bombay it's 16.6 kph.[1]

REFUSE

New York City holds the world waste record of 1.6 kg per person per day (city total 24,000 tonnes per day). European cities throw away half as much, but Tokyo and Mexico are less wasteful still.[1] In poorer countries, where recycling and re-use are common, the throwaway-rate per person may be ten times lower than in rich countries. But lack of money and infrastructure make adequate garbage collection impossible for the poorest cities of the South, causing serious health hazards.[2]

SEWAGE

As the city imports so much food, plant nutrients such as nitrogen and potash are removed from the land forever. It ends up as urban sewage which most modern cities aim to flush away as quickly as possible. Often this gets mixed up with more hazardous chemical wastes, before being discharged into seas, rivers and lakes – or exported.[1]

the facts

HALF THE WORLD'S population lives in cities – and the proportion is growing. As cities consume 75 per cent of the world's resources and create most of its pollution, what we do or don't do with our cities is vital not only for citizens but for the planet too.

THE WAY THEY COULD BE...

TREES

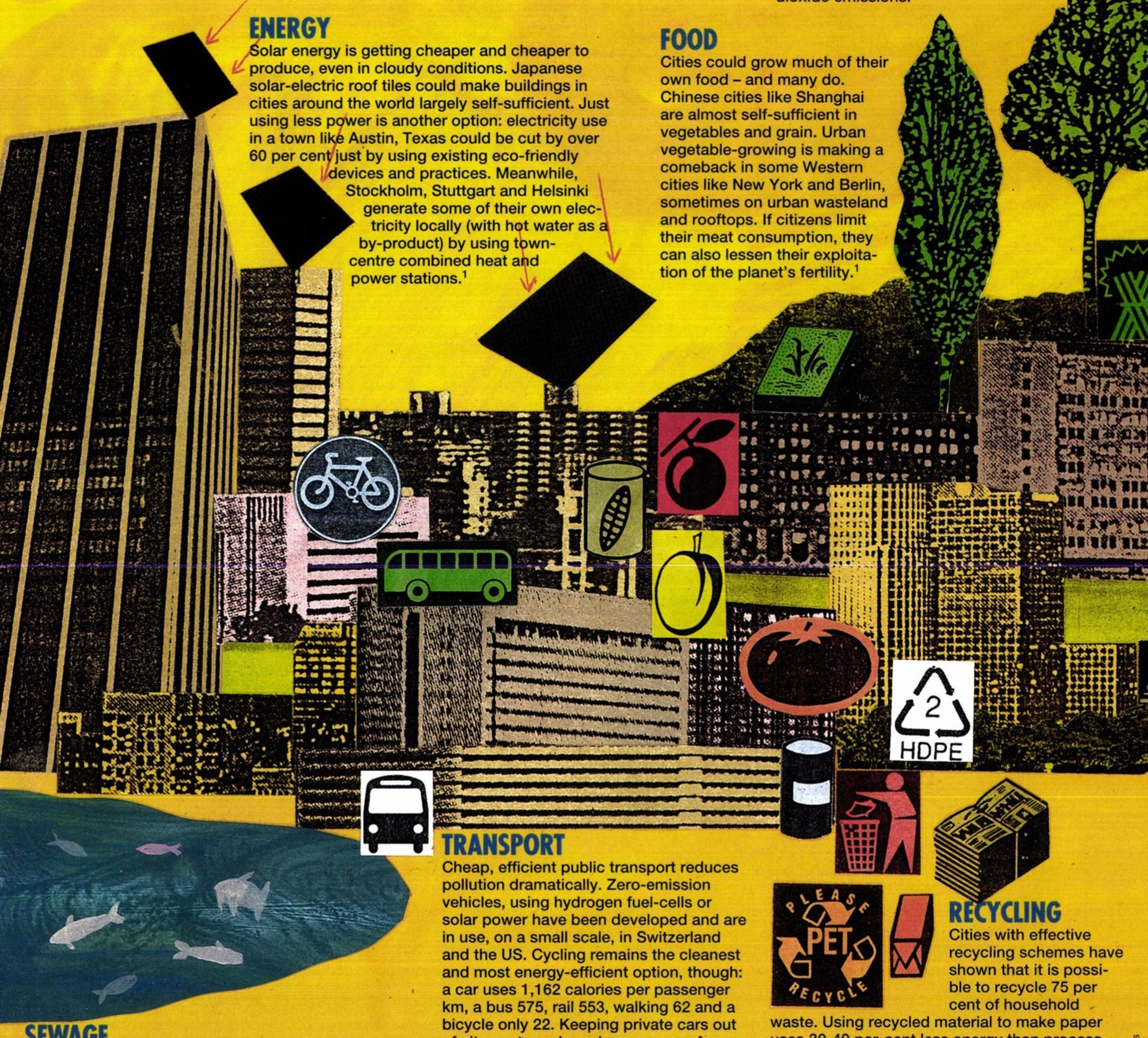
Trees are the earth's natural air conditioners. They absorb harmful carbon and sulphur emissions and filter dust in polluted cities. They also cool down the urban environment: a single tree can transpire 380 litres of water a day. Trees give off oxygen during the day and so help to reduce carbon monoxide and dioxide levels along heavy traffic routes. Planting 50 million trees, taking up 5 per cent of the urban land of St Louis, Mississippi, could mop up the city's annual 455,000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide emissions.[1]

ENERGY

Solar energy is getting cheaper and cheaper to produce, even in cloudy conditions. Japanese solar-electric roof tiles could make buildings in cities around the world largely self-sufficient. Just using less power is another option: electricity use in a town like Austin, Texas could be cut by over 60 per cent just by using existing eco-friendly devices and practices. Meanwhile, Stockholm, Stuttgart and Helsinki generate some of their own electricity locally (with hot water as a by-product) by using town-centre combined heat and power stations.[1]

FOOD

Cities could grow much of their own food – and many do. Chinese cities like Shanghai are almost self-sufficient in vegetables and grain. Urban vegetable-growing is making a comeback in some Western cities like New York and Berlin, sometimes on urban wasteland and rooftops. If citizens limit their meat consumption, they can also lessen their exploitation of the planet's fertility.[1]



TRANSPORT

Cheap, efficient public transport reduces pollution dramatically. Zero-emission vehicles, using hydrogen fuel-cells or solar power have been developed and are in use, on a small scale, in Switzerland and the US. Cycling remains the cleanest and most energy-efficient option, though: a car uses 1,162 calories per passenger km, a bus 575, rail 553, walking 62 and a bicycle only 22. Keeping private cars out of city centres also releases space for public amenities, green areas, food growing and housing.[1]

SEWAGE

Traditionally many towns and cities kept their farmlands productive by recycling human wastes. In Asia especially, using 'nightsoil' to compost agricultural land helped to ensure the ecological viability of cities. The human waste was collected by bucket and cart but now special vacuum trucks are used. Pipelines could transport urban sewage back to fertilize agricultural land and forests, anywhere.[1]

RECYCLING

Cities with effective recycling schemes have shown that it is possible to recycle 75 per cent of household waste. Using recycled material to make paper uses 30-40 per-cent less energy than processing from virgin pulp. Cities in Japan and the Netherlands currently recycle 50 per cent of their paper and 95 per cent of Swedish cities recycle 80 per cent of aluminium cans. In Cairo alone over 500 small factories recycle plastics, while in Manila, Philippines, and Dakar, Senegal, new garbage management and recycling programmes have also created employment.[3]

Sources: 1 Herbert Girardet, *The Gaia Atlas of Cities* (Gaia Books, London 1996). 2 David Sattethwaite ed., *Sustainable Cities: An Earthscan Reader* (Earthscan, London 1999). 3 Richard Gilbert, Don Stevenson, Herbert Girardet and Richard Stren, *Making Cities Work* (Earthscan, London, 1996).

ILLUSTRATION: PAUL DAVIES

TITO CABELLOS

It rains fishmeal

There's little celestial about the city Chimbote – except that it stinks to high heaven. But its determined citizens will risk jail to 'green' it.

Stephanie Boyd went there to find out more.

TODAY, like every other day, six-year-old Jorge is up to his knees in a rushing muddy-red stream of industrial wastewater. With bare hands he feels for fish remains in a stream of oil, blood, innards and various undefined chemicals spewed from a nearby fishmeal fertilizer plant.

The factory's smokestacks, emitting coils of dense, black smoke into an already gray sky, are visible above a high white wall. But Jorge keeps his eyes glued to the steady stream of poisons, pausing briefly to pry open a carcass or toss a fish head on to the bank. His cousin Katerina arranges their 'catch' to dry on the sand. Later Jorge's father will sell the sandy mixture as low-grade fishmeal in town. Sullen and timid, Jorge avoids my questions, but Katerina chats away like any inquisitive seven-year-old.

Nearby, a group of unemployed men eye me suspiciously as they direct waste water into large, muddy holes dug in the sand in which they will skim off the oil. If it were then used as machine oil this could be applauded as 'recycling' – but unfortunately many will sell it for cooking.

The city of Chimbote, some 400 kilometres north of Lima on Peru's stark desert coastline, was once a thriving fishing port. Today it is one of Peru's three most contaminated cities, with 40 fishmeal plants pumping toxins into the air, soil and water 24 hours a day. The pervasive odor of rotting fish is so pungent, thick and acrid, you not only smell Chimbote, but taste it as well. And there's no getting away from it: each breath is ripe with this foul stench as it invades every corner of the city

Chimbote's residents – nearly half of whom live in extreme poverty – complain of increased respiratory illnesses, especially amongst children. Life expectancy in the city is ten years lower than the national average. Nonetheless, Chimbote's story is one of hope, courage and resistance.

Jailed for ecology

It all started with a battle over a local 'tree nursery' – in fact a 40-hectare forested park, created in the 1950s on the outskirts of the city by Peru's Iron and Steel Company. As part of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's drive to privatize state-owned industry, the Nursery was placed on the public auction block in 1993. But local people protested. They fought to preserve the nursery and won – thus inspiring subsequent environmental crusades. Today the nursery is controlled by local citizens.

Luis del Aguila, a 17-year-old university student, takes me there. Surrounded by full-grown pine trees, it's easy to forget we are

As Chimbote's shanty-town dwellers plant sunflowers and trees, big business carries on polluting their city.

in Chimbote as we explore tiny, wooded paths and throw bread to the ducks on a cool, transparent pond. Families picnic, children frolic and swim in the creek and for the first time in more than 24 hours I am not overwhelmed by the smell of rotting fish.

Soft-spoken and mature for his age, Luis explains how the group of students he leads hopes to turn the local Villa Maria wetlands – contaminated by untreated domestic and industrial waste – into a nature reserve like the Tree Nursery. Luis is currently organizing the wetland's third clean-up campaign. Over 1,000 students joined forces last time with rakes and shovels. This time Luis is hoping for 2,000.

'Isn't it beautiful – peaceful and calm?' he says as we wander through the Tree Nursery grounds. My lungs agree. Although the forest is much like any other, for Chimbote it represents half the city's 80 hectares of green space – a deficit of 420 hectares according to international guidelines. The rest of the city, even sections furthest from industry, has no trees and therefore gives no protection against the harmful effects of air pollution, let alone visual relief from the city centre's stark concrete streets lined with cheap billboards, gaudy shops and fast-food stands.

'We have no sense of culture,' complains Luis, discussing the psychological effects of industrial pollution. 'That's why it's so important to get young people involved, to make them proud of their city.'

Instilling pride and galvanizing activism is happening in Chimbote. With the aim of 're-greening' their city, a determined coalition of citizens banded together in 1996 to form the Association for the Defense and Conservation of the Environment of the Province of La Santa. Known by the more manageable acronym ADECOMAPS this broad alliance of 42 different groups – part of Peru's Local Agenda 21 initiative *(see box)* – is slowly breathing new life into the ailing and unappealing city.

But ranged against Chimbote's eco-campaigners are some powerful forces – as Maria Elena Foronda found out. A fearless and vocal defender of environmental and citizens' rights, she and her husband spent 13 months in prison after launching a public-awareness campaign against pollution from the fishmeal factories.

The couple were sentenced to 20 years on 'terrorism' charges. Only persistent local and international pressure led to their release. They certainly did not have the support of Chimbote's mayor, however, who has close ties with the fishing industry and opposes the environmentalists.

Since the persecution, the city's green movement has shifted towards pressing for solutions rather than highlighting injustices. 'Now we are working not just in protests but also proposals,' says Maria Elena, who heads the environmental group Natura.

This is my home

Natura's technology expert, Guillermo Sanchez, is trying to get the fishmeal industry to change its ways. With 15 years' experience working in the Fisheries Ministry, he knows that a cleaner industry is possible. Currently, he is working with the few companies interested in updating their equipment. 'In two or three years the costs are usually recuperated,' he argues. Cleaner technology produces better-quality fishmeal that can command a higher price. Recycling the oil as 'crude' is another way of both increasing revenue and reducing pollution.

'Ten years ago it was impossible to talk about the environment with the fishing industry,' according to Guillermo. Today, industry representatives sit on an environment commission formed late last year by the Peruvian Government. However, most industrialists have made it clear they do not have any problem with upgrading their machinery – as long as the Government foots the bill.

Such abdication of responsibility does not wash with Maria Elena, who points to the income gap between 'millionaire owners' of the profitable industry and workers who do not earn enough to cover their family's basic needs. 'Most of the owners do not even live in Chimbote,' she complains. Industry executives have long seen Chimbote more as a convenient garbage dump than a home. Of the 278,000 people who do live in Chimbote, three-quarters reside in shanty towns near the city's factories.

AGENDA 21 IN PERU

Agenda 21 was the document signed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, outlining a 'Global Plan of Action' for sustainable development. The initiative supports the creation of local committees bringing grassroots community groups together with business and political interests to devise plans for sustainable environmental development.

In February of 1996 ADECOMAPS, with the Cities for Living Forum, came together with the Peruvian Government's National Environment Council (CONAM) to work out Peru's Agenda 21 framework. CONAM has brought together 13 Peruvian cities with critical environmental problems to make plans at a national level.

As the process is still in its infancy, environmentalists can only hope it will lead to concrete actions and not become merely a political tool to improve the tarnished image of industry in Peru.

Clara Temoche heads a group of health promoters in a community called April 15, created by a people's 'land invasion' on that date 15 years ago. Clara helped form their first committee to demand water, sewers and green areas. After getting nowhere with municipal authorities, she made contact with Natura which funded water and sewerage systems while the population contributed their labor.

But Clara's community has made no headway with the fishing industry. Residents planted trees in front of the Spanish-owned plant just 50 meters from Clara's house, but she says this has not brought them any favors from officials who refuse to meet with community representatives.

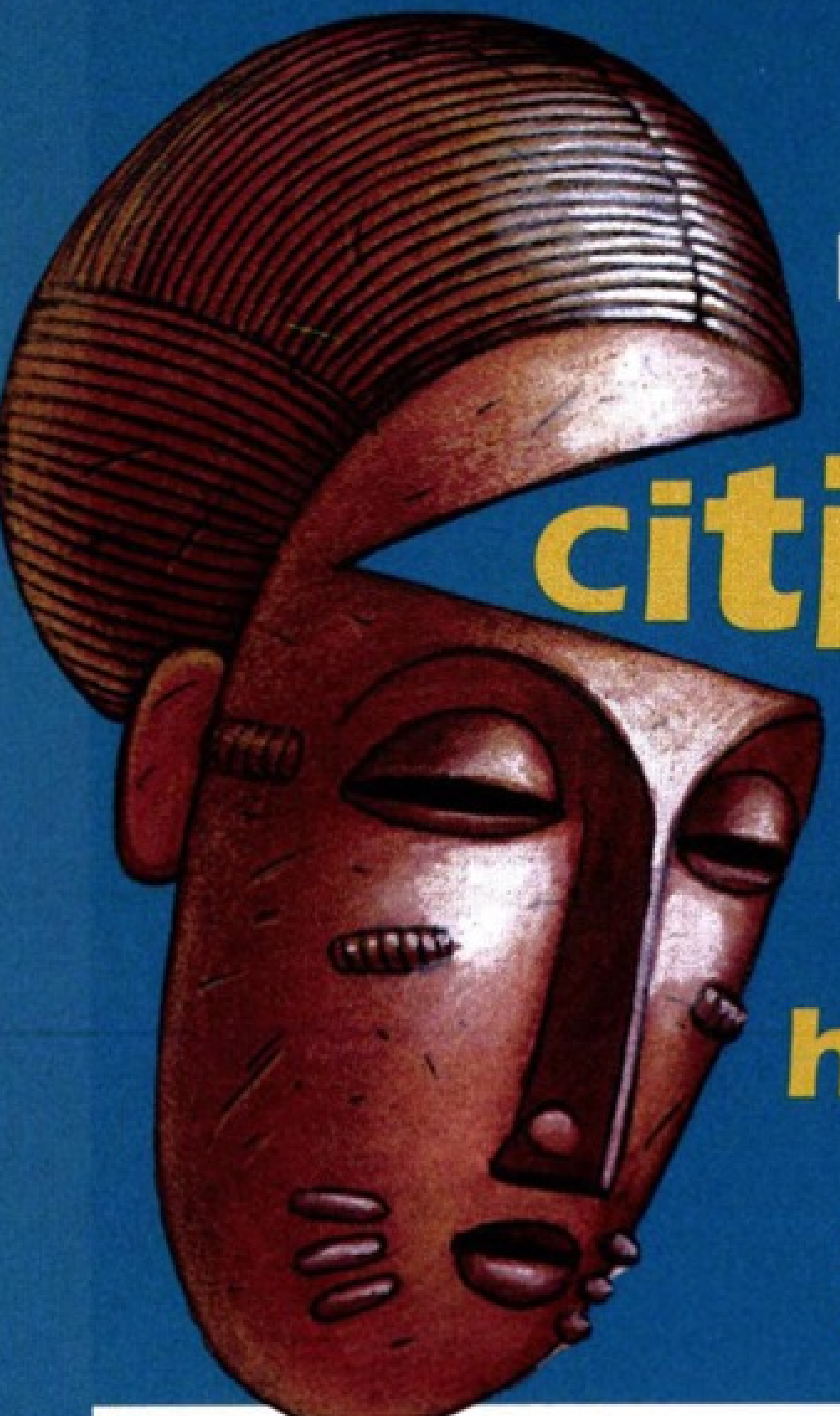
An outspoken defender of children's rights, her anger at the industry's lack of concern is apparent. A neighbour's child comes to play and she explains that the white rashes on the boy's face will require numerous scrubbings with lemon juice to remove the fungus. Children in her community also suffer considerably from bronchial infections and other respiratory problems.

'When it rains, it rains fishmeal,' says Clara, adding that the substance accumulates on roofs and the black soot from the factory turns white clothing black as it dries outside. But Clara is not one to give up. Instead she proudly details her community's latest plan to construct a children's center with a health post and recreational and educational facilities.

The dedication of such a diverse and talented group in Chimbote struck me repeatedly throughout my visit. 'Why do you stay?' I kept blurting out and always received the same look of genuine surprise: 'Why would we leave when there's so much to do?' My mind goes back to Clara's fellow activist Maria Elena Foronda, whose imprisonment is now emblematic of Chimbote's green movement. Even in jail she organized training sessions on subjects ranging from the environment and family planning to traditional dance. 'When my release came through and it was time to leave, it took me two hours to say goodbye to all the new friends I'd made.'

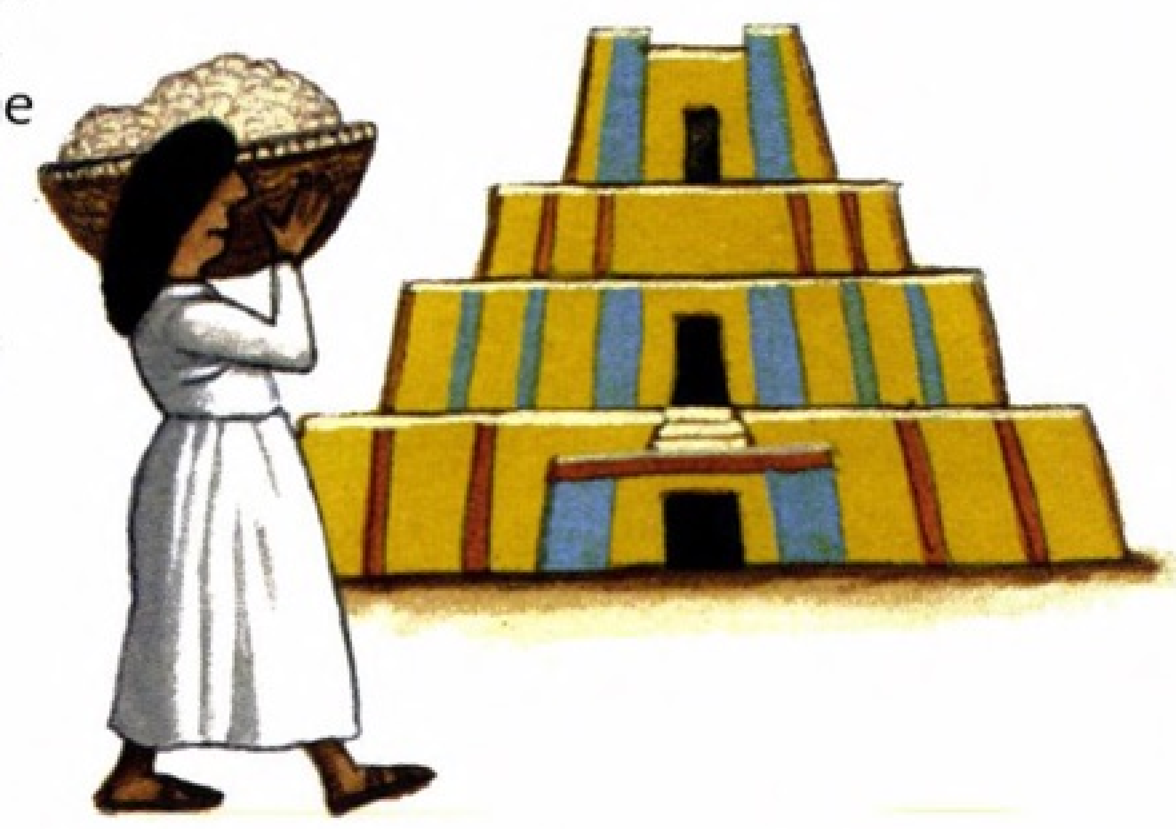
Now that she has her own family, Maria Elena's drive has grown even stronger, despite living in one of Chimbote's most polluted neighborhoods. When I ask her the familiar question – why not move to a cleaner city? – she coddles her baby girl lovingly, replying simply: 'This is my home. I'm not leaving.' ■

Canadian journalist **Stephanie Boyd** works with Latin America Press in Lima, Peru.



cities

A history of ideas



1 SYMBOLS OF ORDER

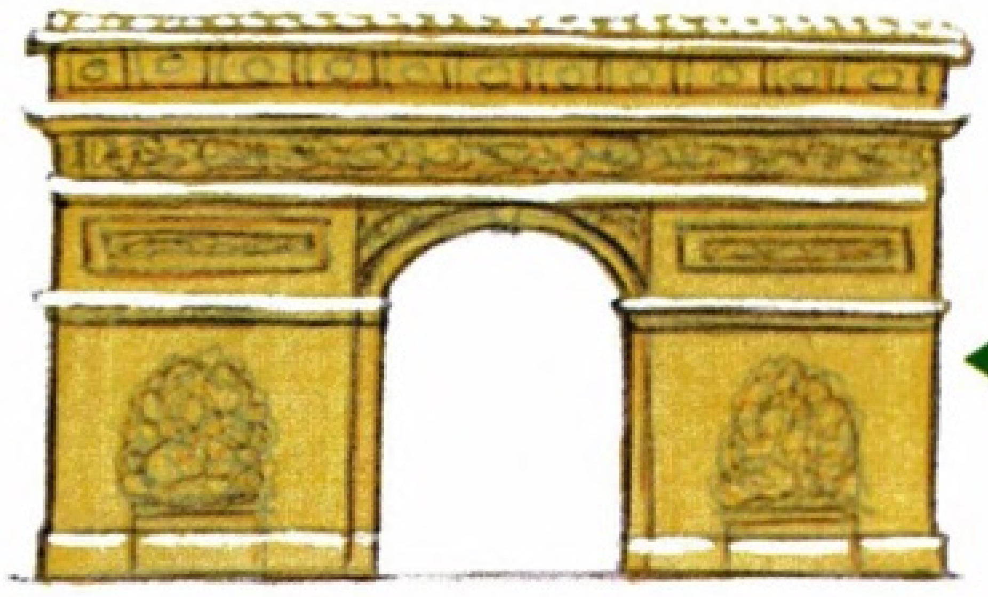
From around 10,000 BC nomadic hunter gatherers began to create permanent settlements, whose shape tended to reflect ideas about the cosmic order. Circular designs predominated in societies living close to nature – in the traditional villages of African pastoralists, for example. Others favoured the stark artifice of the grid. The Chinese of the 1800-1200 BC Shang Dynasty, for example, had a perfect square as the ideal layout for their cities.

2 CITIES FROM HEAVEN

By 3500 BC there were many prosperous walled city-states, with up to 30,000 people, in the fertile river delta of Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). With their temples, ziggurats and towers these cities indicated the desire for a permanence transcending human mortality. Founding cities was part of the role of priest-kings, seen as mediators between heaven and earth. An Ancient Sumerian document records how five god-appointed kings were given five cities in 'pure places'.

9 SPLENDOUR AND OPPRESSION

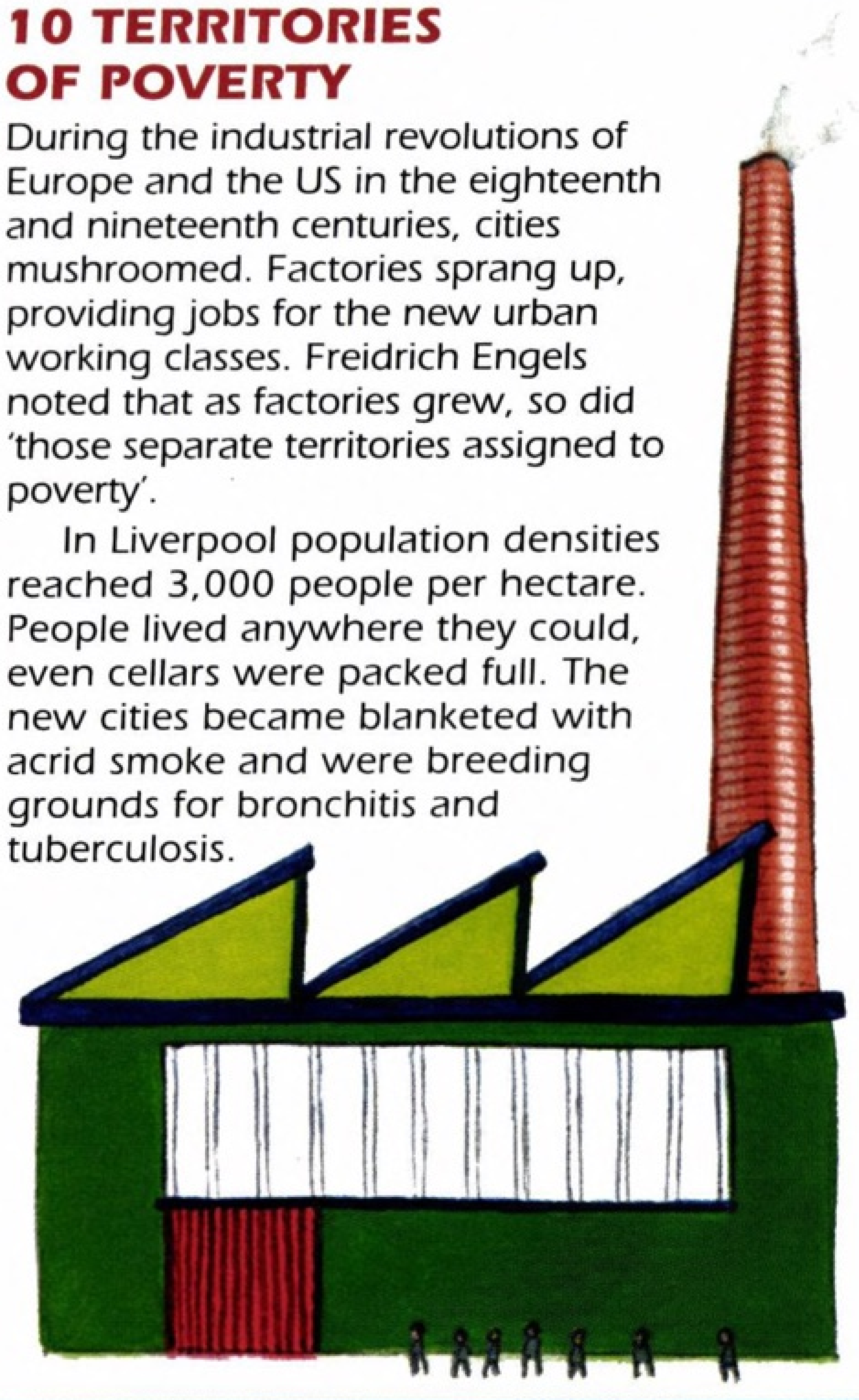
French Emperor Napoleon III wanted a capital worthy of a great imperial power and free from hiding places for anarchists and other 'trouble-makers'. In the mid-1800s city Prefect Baron Haussmann was charged with rebuilding Paris, which he did by cutting through the maze of medieval streets and constructing magnificent straight boulevards. This model of social control was copied around the world. It was also imposed in Algeria and other French colonies, where medinas were ruthlessly 'modernized' by military engineers. The British empire, for its part, created 60 cities around the world as a means of securing trade routes and exercising colonial control.



10 TERRITORIES OF POVERTY

During the industrial revolutions of Europe and the US in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cities mushroomed. Factories sprang up, providing jobs for the new urban working classes. Freidrich Engels noted that as factories grew, so did 'those separate territories assigned to poverty'.

In Liverpool population densities reached 3,000 people per hectare. People lived anywhere they could, even cellars were packed full. The new cities became blanketed with acrid smoke and were breeding grounds for bronchitis and tuberculosis.

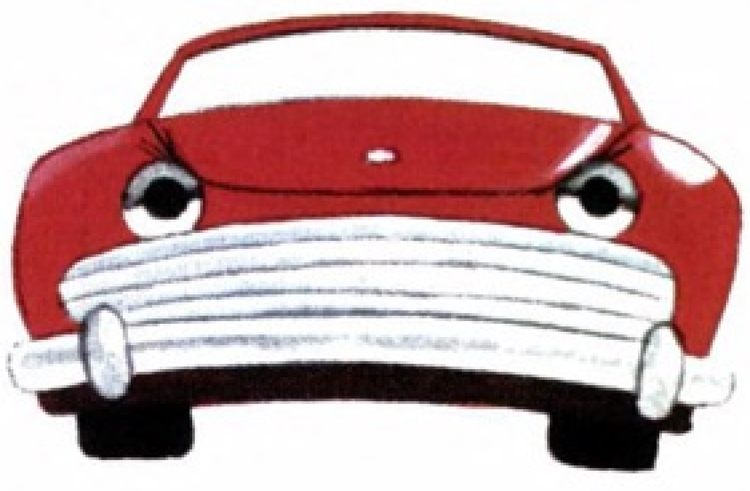


11 A CITY IN THE GARDEN

In 1898 English architect Ebenezer Howard suggested a solution to pollution and overcrowding: create new 'garden cities' in the country. These moderately sized, self-contained, urban communities would also be socially, economically and ecologically sustainable. Howard also proposed shared ownership of land. But the few garden cities built in Britain (Welwyn and Letchworth) and the US (Sunnyside Gardens, Chatham Village and Radburn) turned out to be leafy commuter-belt travesties, devoid of Howards' social idealism.

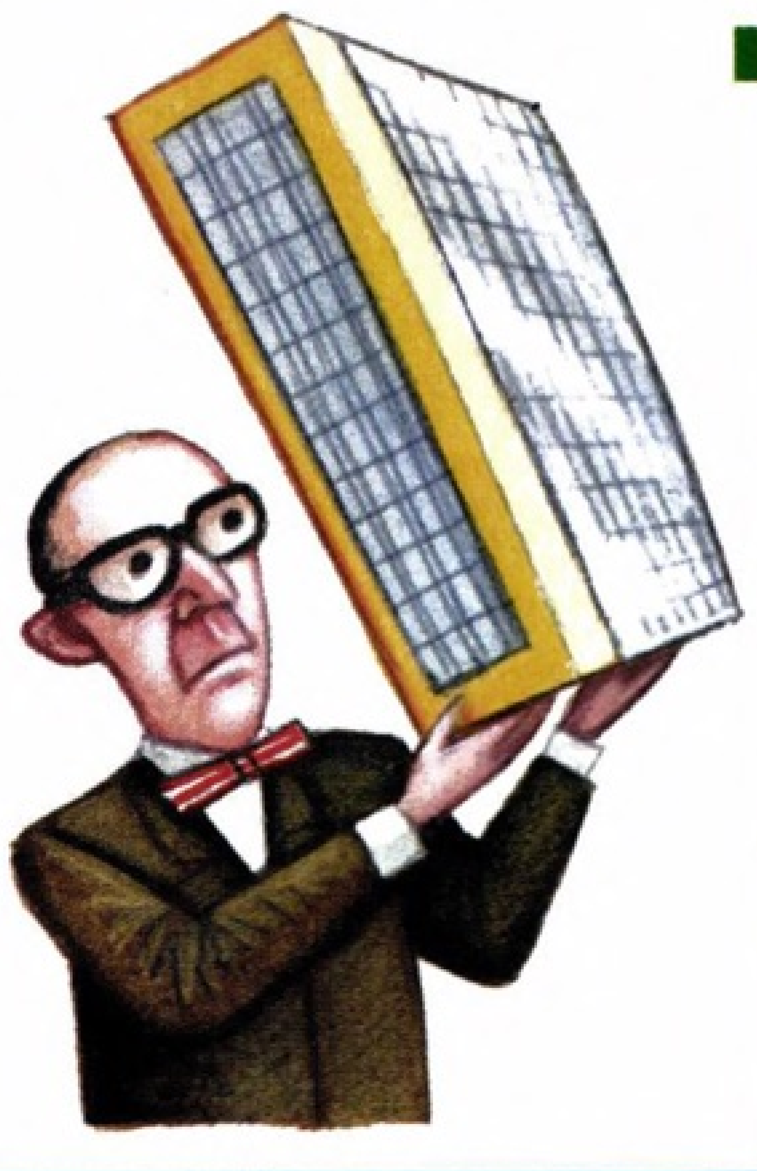
12 KING OF THE SPRAWL

American Frank Lloyd Wright, proposed that cities would 'disappear': each family's own home would function as a city centre. Cars would shrink distance, giant freeways forming an intrinsic part of the urban 'architecture'. There was also a strong element of traditional American 'homesteading' in his 1930s vision, with each house set in an acre of land for growing food. Trimmed lawns materialized, food-growing did not. Nor did cities 'disappear' as he had predicted. But car-dependent suburban sprawl became the norm – minus the communal social benefits such as garden schools and farm units, that Lloyd Wright had also proposed.



13 GEOMETRIC ASSAULT

Le Corbusier was the guru of the modernism that came to dominate twentieth-century cities. 'Houses', said the Swiss watchmaker's son, 'are machines for living in.' 'Pure geometry' was the ideal and he praised the fact that cities were an 'assault on nature'. His designs involved large blocks of flats towering over open, tree-dotted spaces, linked by highways. Le Corbusier planned only one real city, Chandigarh in newly-independent India. But he was the inspiration for Brasilia and other post-1945 cities in capitalist and communist countries alike. 'The design of cities is too important to be left to citizens,' he famously said. Such arrogance enraged critics who labelled Corbusian design as 'ego-tripping' for architects, who were sufficiently privileged not to have to live in the tower blocks or concrete-and-steel wastelands of their creation.



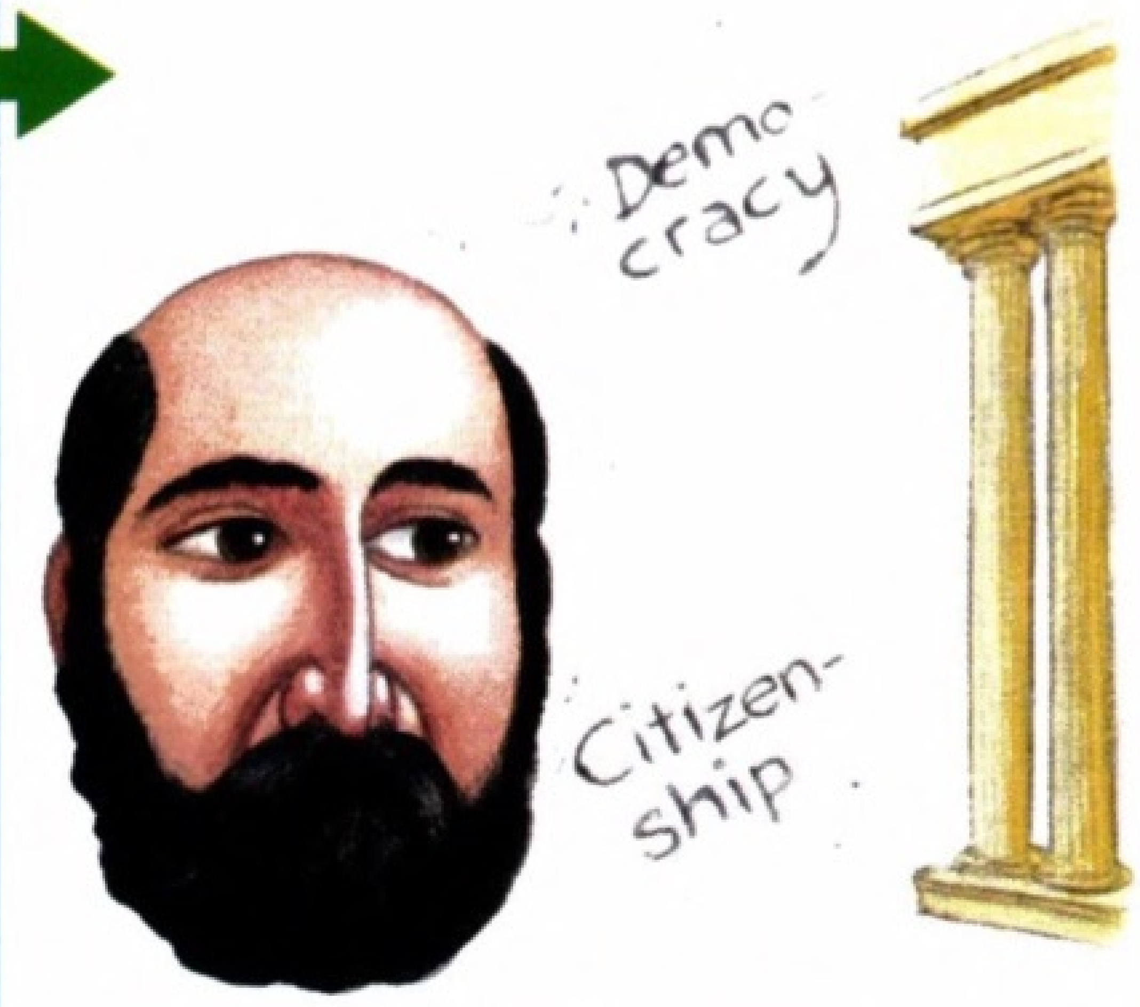
14 DO-IT-YOURSELF CITY

During the 1950s and 1960s there was a wave of reaction against the 'totalitarian' approach epitomized by Le Corbusier. British architect John Turner was profoundly influenced by his work in the self-built *barriadas* of Lima, Peru. He expected slums. Instead he found orderly, well-functioning, self-managing settlements.

As 'the expert' Turner had little to teach the *barriada* dwellers: 'they knew perfectly well not only what to build but how to build it.' He concluded that when people had control over the key decisions concerning their housing and their environments this produced social well-being. When they didn't, their environments became 'a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden on the economy'.

3. BUILT POLITICS

Ideas of citizenship and democracy mattered most to fifth-century BC Athenians. For them the city was 'built politics' – the word 'politics' actually derives from the Greek for city. Living quarters in Athens were modest, with little distinction between rich and poor. Essential civic amenities – theatre and gymnasium, for example – were grander. Socrates saw the city as a place of ideas and he criticized those who had 'filled [it] full of harbours and docks and walls and revenues... and.... left no room for justice and temperance'. Plato and Aristotle thought the city should be more socially segregated and exclusive. But many were already debarred from democracy and citizenship – women and slaves for a start.



4. PARASITIC CITY

With a population of a million, by AD 100 Rome was the world's largest city. Unlike Athens, it did not sustain itself by cultivating surrounding areas but relied upon its colossal empire to provide it with food, raw materials and slaves. The culture of exploitation was mirrored within the city itself, the ruling class living in opulence while others dwelt in overcrowded, unsanitary tenements for which they paid inflated rents.

Public hygiene was abysmal – refuse, including human corpses, was dumped in vast piles. 'Pathological' and 'parasitical' is how one commentator described imperial Rome. But the Roman Empire also left towns and cities all over Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor.

5. WALLS OF FREEDOM

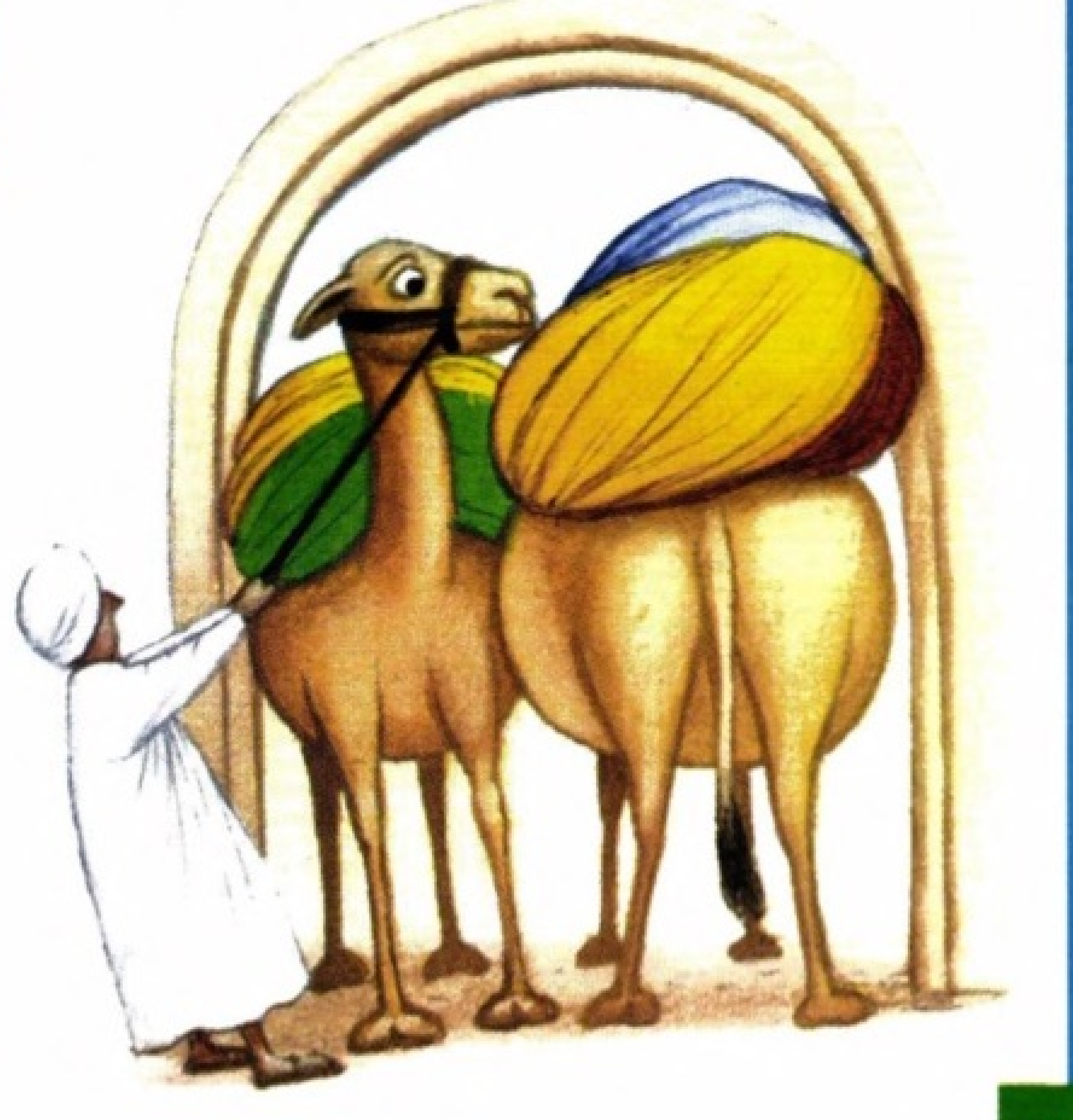
In the early Middle Ages many flocked from the land to the new 'free cities' of Europe, controlled not by feudal lords but by citizens. By AD 1200 urbanization was taking hold across the continent. Although citizens gained freedom from taxes imposed by local lords, every able-bodied person was obliged to contribute to maintaining the city walls. These had defensive functions, but they also guaranteed self-determination. The medieval city walls symbolized the 'free' collaboration of merchants, priests scholars, craftspeople and warriors.

6 ORDER AND SACRIFICE

The Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, on which modern Mexico now stands, was an explicit expression of the intertwining of state and religion. The city, of up to 200,000 people, consisted of a highly symmetrical arrangement of temples, administrative centres, plazas and military schools. Towering above were pyramids where humans were sacrificed to gods. But poet and engineer King Nezahualcoyotl, crowned in 1431, discouraged such cruelty and promoted instead the idea of the city as a cultural and intellectual centre.

7 EMBODIED HUMANISM

In the 1450s Italian Renaissance architect Leone Battista Alberti initiated the classical city revival, restoring Rome's aqueducts and rebuilding ruined ancient monuments. His vision was to give cities a magnificence that would instil pride. Renaissance cities became the embodiments of a humanistic world view in which people, rather than God or nature, took centre stage. Indeed, architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini saw the relation of the city to its parts as 'similar to that of the human body... the streets are the veins'.



8 LABYRINTHS OF PRIVACY

Traditional Islamic cities, from the ninth to the nineteenth century, reflected a concern for visual privacy. This determined the placing of doors and windows and the height of buildings. Houses were 'introverted', the appearance toward the street being unimportant.

Religious law prescribed that streets should be wide enough to allow two fully-laden camels to pass freely. Organic, labyrinthine medinas (old quarters) were the main characteristic of Islamic cities, to be found in Moorish Spain and Islamic India, as well as the Middle East.

15 NON-PLANNING

Similar ideas were taking hold in the industrialized world. In Britain a highly iconoclastic 1969 manifesto – written by Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price – proposed 'non-planning'.

In the US Jane Jacobs campaigned for a return to the density and variety of the traditional unplanned city, while Richard Sennett argued for the democratic benefits 'in extricating the city from preplanned control'. Anarchists in Copenhagen put their politics into practice in 1971 by creating an autonomous free town, Christiana, which still exists today.

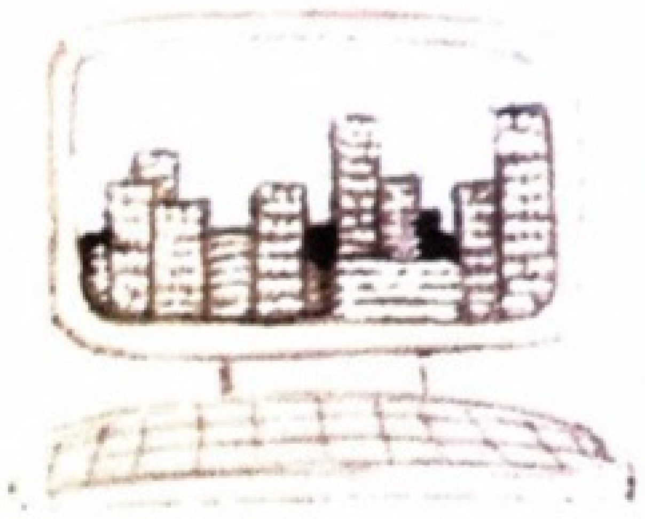
In the decade that followed several small-scale 'community architecture' projects took off in other parts of the world.

16 MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

Marxist studies which explained urban growth in terms of circulation of capital were current in the 1970s. But as those theories became increasingly abstract, the practice of city development became more crude and pragmatic. The 1980s saw economic recession, industrial job losses and the rise of the radical Right; city authorities were under pressure to open doors to business, whatever the social cost. Planning again came under attack – this time from free-marketeers who felt it interfered with enterprise.

17 INFO-CITY

Information technologies, especially the Internet, have taken the world by storm. The fashionable view is that they will do away with the need for cities: anyone can perform any activity anywhere. But Spanish philosopher Manuel Castells detects an opposite trend: the new technologies have concentrated power in the most dominant metropoli – Los Angeles, New York, London – and boosted the capitalist system. The result, he says, is deepening social inequality and escalating urban violence.



Sources: Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*. Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*. Herbert Girardet, *The Gaia Atlas of Cities*.

ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL TERRY

Exit from auto hell

While some cities are deepening their automobile dependence, others are finding ways of breaking free. **Peter Newman** shows how.

Los Angeles is the city of dreams – it has created fantasies, romances and visions of tomorrow that have seeped into every corner of the world. Disneyland, movies and television permeate every part of the city and its dream industry. Yet its traffic, sprawl and smog reveal a waking nightmare – a city with no vision other than that of the highway engineer.

The freedom over space and time that is promised by the car was a perfect fit for the Los Angeles dream: a city of individuals where streets and other public places are easily sacrificed to traffic. In most cities there is an alternative dream to slow down the traffic, to provide alternative modes, to build urban villages where people don't need a car – but not in LA. The city of angels it seems is not up to that kind of dream, it prefers to create the fantasies of Hollywood. So the freeways keep coming and the sprawl keeps growing.

Bangkok is also known as the city of angels, and for its recent history it has been pursuing the car about as keenly as LA. Traffic levels regularly exceed road capacity so that total gridlock seems a whisker away on most days.

Alternative visions for cities where car dependence is not so dominant are not difficult to find. Many European cities like Zurich, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Freiburg have shown how to reduce their traffic. Up the west coast from Los Angeles is Portland, where a citizen-initiated vision stopped the Mount Hood Expressway and saw it build MAX, their light rail system, instead. Portland's downtown public spaces, its traffic-calmed neighbourhoods and its growing use of light rail testify to their different vision. Although still heavily car-dependent, Portland has ventured on to a different path.

In Asia, Singapore decided it would not follow the American dream and has for 20 years created a wealthy city-state based around its electric rail system and well-designed centres. The city has a sixth of the car use in Los Angeles and eight times as much use of public transport. Although it's nearly four times as wealthy, Singapore has 40-per-cent less car use than Bangkok, 20-per-cent more public transport use.

Singapore went against World Bank advice by building an electric rail system. The American transport establishment which has dominated Bank policy for 50 years, still regards electric rail as an inferior choice to upgrading bus services. Singapore has proven them to be wrong. Only cities with good electric rail systems show average speeds of transit faster than traffic, thus offering a competitive advantage to transit. In Singapore the traffic

Taking 'the toys from the boys', Hollywood B-movie style. This one is *The 50ft Woman*.

speed averages 32 kph and the MRT train averages 40 kph. In Bangkok the traffic crawls along at 13 kph and the bus system averages a mere 9 kph. Imagine the dramatic improvement if Bangkok could build a similar rail system to Singapore, and thus offer a real solution to its traffic. Instead the tollways grow and the traffic worsens.

These cities are all determined by their dreams, not some inevitable process of the market. If you look at the cost of a transport system as a proportion of city wealth, Bangkok spends 17 per cent of its city wealth on its car-dominated transport system while Singapore spends a mere 7 per cent of its city wealth on its transit dominated transport system.

Los Angeles with all its freeways – and minuscule transit – spends 12 per cent of its wealth on transport while most European cities – with extensive transit systems – spend only 8 per cent. Overall, from an international study of 37 cases[1], those cities which have good transit systems based around electric rail have much lower total transport costs than those cities which have freeways and poor bus-based transit. This is the opposite of current investment ideology which suggests that freeways are good for a city's economy and transit is a drain on city wealth.

To manage a city with traffic problems is a big challenge but the evidence we have gathered at Perth's Institute for Science and Technology Policy indicate that it can be done. However, the process must begin with a dream that is fostered by a city's people until the insistent solutions of traffic engineers are quietened and the commonsense of the common good is heard.

The vibrancy of Greenwich Village in New York would have been lost had it not been for the citizens, led by Jane Jacobs, who stood up to the freeway plan of Robert Moses. Then when Jacobs moved to Toronto she helped in the fight to stop the Spadina Expressway which would have cut a swathe through the inner city. Instead of building this or any other expressways the city went for public transport and has created one of the least auto-dependent cities in North America. Similar stories can be told in Portland, Vancouver, and in most European cities, all of which had large motorway plans dreamed up for them by international traffic-planning consultants.

Common to all these stories of citizen-based action to stop freeways, has been the importance of key women who have helped to create a different dream for their cities. That freeways are a man's toy is also very obvious and it is not hard to see why some men feel the need to impose this fetish on their city. The anti-freeway movement is about taking the 'toys from the boys' and instead presenting a dream of how light rail, traffic calming and urban villages can provide a softer, more human kind of city.

In Los Angeles, despite the last freeway costing $200 million per kilometre to build, and despite only 18 per cent of the population actually believing that freeways help ease congestion, the city is planning another freeway through 1,000 homes in Pasadena. Lois Arkin, who founded LA's Eco-Village, has a different dream and with the residents of Pasadena and other transit advocates she is hopeful that this dream can win the day. But the dream merchants of Hollywood are still going strong; at Disneyland's latest attraction, the Rocket Rods, Walt Disney himself pronounces in full surround video that 'the symbol of American freedom is the highway'. ■

Peter Newman is Professor of City Policy at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. His most recent book – co-authored with Dr Jeff Kenworthy – is *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence* (Island Press, 1999).

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[1] Research conducted by Perth's Institute for Science and Technology Policy

Kicking the habit: Planning as therapy

THE CAR IS THE TECHNOLOGY which involves the biggest number of employees, the highest advertising budget, the largest annual accidental death rate and the biggest contribution to global warming. How do you begin to approach managing something so popular and yet so destructive? There are three ways: technology (civilizing the car), economics (pricing it) and planning (reducing the need to travel and providing other options). Two cities that have shown how effective the last of these – planning – can be, are Stockholm and Curitiba.

STOCKHOLM

IT HAS LONG BEEN POLICY IN STOCKHOLM (population 1.6 million) to develop around stations on the city's rapid transit system. The centres are strung together like pearls on a bead along the railway system and are all of a high density, particularly around the station core. All these sub-centers show the characteristics of urban villages, though some are predominantly residential while others have a mix of uses.

Stockholm's centers are compact and of 'walking' scale, with a rich array of facilities clustered together within a relatively small area. Motorized and non-motorized transport are segregated, town squares are traffic-free and there are well-integrated parks and children's play areas. This helps make for a dense but human-scale environment. There is plenty of open space, woven throughout the housing areas, as well as contact with natural assets such as lakes and woods.

While there is an emphasis on local self-sufficiency within Stockholm's sub-centers, the need for good transit connections to the core and other parts of the city is paramount. But it's assumed that people will use bus or rail rather than cars. Such planning has created a wealthy city with car use that is almost a third of US cities. More importantly it has reduced car use per capita in the past decade – and plans to continue doing so.

Entrada
Saida
D121

Raised bus shelters for speedy boarding in Curitiba.

PAUL SMITH / PANOS PICTURES

CURITIBA

THE BRAZILIAN CITY OF CURITIBA (population 1.8 million) has shown how even with scarce urban resources it is possible to create a coherent, city-wide transit service that is closely integrated to land use and social policy.

The transit system, developed over the past 20 years, began with the use of express buses on exclusive lanes on axes radiating out of the city centre. Brainchild of City Mayor (and planner) Jaime Lerner, the concept's success is due to the fact that it is supported by strong planning that ensures the bus routes act like railways. The system is used by more than 1.3 million passengers each day, 28 per cent of whom previously travelled by car. This has meant 25-per-cent less fuel consumption city-wide and one of the lowest levels of air pollution in Brazil.

The central city areas have been pedestrianized and historic buildings are protected from redevelopment as a result of the reduced pressure from cars. Several main thoroughfares have been closed to traffic and converted into tree-lined walkways.

Balanced development of sub-centers along the transit system has also helped protect the historic city centre. Having acquired land along or close to the new busways prior to their construction, the municipal government was able to plan convenient, high-density housing for 17,000 lower-income families.

The system runs smoothly: express buses, inter-district buses and conventional (feeder) buses are now fully integrated into the network. There are large bus terminals at the end of each of the five express busways where people can transfer to inter-district or feeder buses. The next phase of Curitiba's growth is to develop higher-capacity rail services along the main axes.

CURITIBA HAS SHOWN THAT PLANNING CAN WORK in a less-wealthy city just as Stockholm has shown it works in a rich one. The key is visionary political leadership which is implemented in stages with strong grassroots support.

Peter Newman

CHRIS STOWERS / PANOS PICTURES

Mirror, Mirror...

Amsterdam is one of the most eco-aware capitals in the world. **Dinyar Godrej** compares it with his Indian hometown of Indore.

'WHAT a lot of rubbish for just one person,' said 12-year-old Monica peering with characteristic nosiness into the small tin wastebucket in my room. Despite the fact that the contents of the bin were mainly debris from gifts I had brought from the Netherlands for my family in India, and so, strictly speaking, not my rubbish, I couldn't help feeling a twinge of guilt. For the amount of rubbish that issues forth each day from my parents' two-storey house, even at full occupancy, is miniscule.

No food gets thrown away. My mother buys just enough to last for a few days. Her refrigerator is a transit lounge; nothing stays long enough to grow mould. Bottles, boxes, containers never make it to the bin – spices and oil get stored in them, plants start life in them, children lay claim to any cardboard and scribble and paint on it, and sculpt it into 'creations'. Old newspapers are sold off. Old clothing either gets handed down or, if it's the worse for wear, it gets torn into rags that polish shoes, clean windows and mop up after male toilet-goers who have wobbly aim. Tea leaves and eggshells propagate rosebushes and fruit trees.

> *Rubbish here doesn't disappear anonymously in black bags into the cavernous maw of compressor trucks*

None of this is taken as evidence of any particular stinginess on my parents' part – it's just common sense. Indeed, I doubt anyone in their right mind in Indore, the city where my parents live and where I grew up, would want to get the reputation of being wasteful, as rubbish here doesn't disappear anonymously in black bags into the cavernous maw of compressor trucks. It gets carried by hand to the local dump, where it lies, odorously, until the open-backed municipal truck comes to cart it away. But before that happens, it will be combed over by rag pickers who retrieve anything recyclable. The containers are invariably broken into to allow access to the squadrons of slate-coloured pigs that patrol the city in search of titbits.

Indore is no green haven – it's sprawling in every possible direction and builders are blocking up every available space with a vengeance. Scooters, three-wheelers and cars choke its streets and its residents. Rates of asthma, especially among children, have surged. Nevertheless, the city survives and indeed thrives with an economy of means that would be the envy of many of its Western counterparts. And, importantly, it lives in its own mess, rather than hurling it halfway across the globe.

As I currently live in the Netherlands, amongst the environmentally sanest of European countries, comparisons shoot across my mind whenever I return to Indore. Though most Westerners are unaware of Indore's existence, its population of over 1.4 million beats Amsterdam, the Dutch capital, hands down. However, unlike Amsterdam which isn't growing, Indore's population has tripled since 1971, accreting in concrete folds around the old city. The sleepy residential area where my parents live has had a rude awakening – any house that gets sold is promptly demolished to make way for blocks of flats. Each time I visit they have planted more trees in an attempt to preserve some of the privacy they previously enjoyed.

The residents of Amsterdam have, of course, had a longer period of time to get used to the idea of living on top of each other. The moment the clock strikes ten, legions of the Dutch dash across living rooms to turn down their stereos out of consideration for their neighbours. Houses and gardens don't even begin to figure in an Amsterdammer's scheme of things. The city is compact apart from the suburbs and most distances are walkable. Cars, excepting taxis, are banished from central Amsterdam and, anyway, trying to find a parking space is reputed to take years off one's life. Trams and buses are frequent, and cyclists rule. Wherever possible in Dutch cities, cyclists have their own lanes and people of all ages take to their bikes. So strong is the cycling culture that doctors often advise patients suffering from work-related stress to try cycling to work.

Indeed, environmental consciousness in the public sphere is all-pervasive. Local Agenda 21 groups in the various cities are routinely consulted before municipal corporations undertake projects with environmental implications.

Even at the national level, public participation in environmental lawmaking is well-established. And the results are impressive – ozone-eating substances have been phased out, industrial waste reduced dramatically, and most emissions have abated. Household energy use fell by a

A typical Dutch citizen (below) contributes 14 times as much carbon dioxide pollution as the average Indian (left).

modest but significant five per cent between 1990 and 1994.[1]

Some commentators crow about the 'decoupling' of economic growth and environmental pressure. For in this country where most people work four days a week and job sharing is commonplace, there have been no fallbacks in public and social service provision and the Gross Domestic Product remains one of the highest in Europe.

It would appear that with their focus on solutions, the Dutch have achieved the impossible – cleaning up their act whilst keeping the cash tills ringing. Or have they? For, when discussion turns to sustainability, it's still a case of two cheers rather than three. And here's why.

The price of pears

This tiny densely-populated country has a purchasing power that is two-thirds that of India, a land 93 times its size. So while Amsterdammers can be justifiably proud of how clean and green their city is, their purses are hoovering resources from far-flung areas of the world whilst leaving the environmental costs behind. Whilst Dutch architects have come up with prototype houses that can cut energy use by 60 per cent, the Dutch consumer's use of primary aluminium, the extraction of which burns up obscene amounts of energy, is actually increasing.

In the festive atmosphere of the local market it's easy to overlook those Cuban oranges and Argentinean pears selling at ridiculously cheap prices. Or indeed to forget when looking at the rounds of cheese piled high, that the cattle were fed with grain often sourced in the Majority World.

Friends of the Earth Netherlands have estimated that one-and-a-half times the country's total land area is under forest abroad just to supply it with its wood and paper needs. Indeed, if one looks at that engine of consumption, the automobile, one sees that carbon dioxide emissions are actually rising despite impressive falls in other types of emissions. The level now stands at nearly 11 tonnes per person, several times the sustainable figure of 1.7 tonnes. The average Indian's contribution despite the choking cities is 0.81 tonnes. Then there is the other tell-tale sign of over-consumption; the increase in domestic trash.[2]

It is estimated that the average Amsterdammer would have to cut her consumption by a whopping 70 to 90 per cent in order to live within her environmental space.[1] This is a figure that no doubt baffles a nation where *zuinigheid* or thrift holds great cultural value. Clearly there is a gap between frowning upon conspicuous consumption in public and indulging in a little of what you fancy at home. In a Europe-wide survey of public opinion the Dutch came out strongest in favour of much higher prices and taxes to protect the environment. They were less keen on the idea of cutting down on consumption.[1]

There are some encouraging signs though. The third Netherlands' National Environmental Policy Plan addresses over-consumption – for the first time. Environmental lobbyists are arguing that Dutch industry which has been so willing to grapple with environmental issues at home, must now look at sustainability as well and offset the environmental costs in the land where the resource is being mined. There are calls for greater grain sourcing from Europe and a pricing policy that would reflect real costs.

One of the things that becomes acutely apparent whenever I return to India, is this issue of cost. Even though I tend to have very little left in the bank at the end of the month in Holland, the price of food is not quite the issue it is in India. At my parents' home prices are carefully monitored and the food bill is a much greater proportion of their overall expenses than mine ever is. In Indore consumption has to fit every purse, the greengrocer will sell you wares in the tiniest amounts and manufactured goods come in much smaller sizes. No-one flings stuff at you for a pittance in order to get you to buy more. The trick wouldn't work once prices rose again.

A bucket of water

In global terms Indian cities like Indore still do not take up their 'ecological space' and consumption can grow with their 'newly industrializing' status. But local environmentalists would beg to differ, for the scale of sustainability is completely different here.

Take the ever-present water shortage in Indore. I have never taken a shower in all my years there, apart, that is, from jumping around in the monsoon rain as a kid. A bucket of water is sufficient for the daily bath that most Indians can't do without. Yet the city is drawing water from the Narmada river depriving villages where the supply is sourced. The Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment is campaigning vigorously for increased harvesting of rainwater instead of draining the rivers, arguing that supply on tap encourages an irresponsible attitude. Indore does vividly illustrate the environmental virtues of investing in sanitation for slums, however. A pioneering slum-networking project has provided the city's slums with good drainage and sewerage. Once this investment had been made, the people living

MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

there felt more secure and got to work improving their houses and taking care of the trees planted in front of them. There were palpable social effects too – the organization of schools, women's groups and community centres. The sewerage system has benefited the entire city and the river Khan that flows through it is no longer quite the open drain it once was. Similar projects are now starting up in other Indian cities.

Economists predict that countries like India and China will be the superpowers in the coming generation. I'm not holding my breath, but the rhetoric of the good life is already strong amongst the Indian middle classes. On the outskirts of Indore lies Pithampur, an industrial area that has contributed greatly to the improved fortunes of the region. One industrialist speaks of an impressive raft of environmental regulations and spot checks by government inspectors – but adds that a bribe is the usual substitute for actual controls. Despite every effort on his part, the factory which has been running for years still hasn't had its application with the environmental board considered. Recently he added a neutralization plant to deal with its waste entirely on his own initiative.

Industrialized nations that have polluted the planet for years and continue to gobble up its resources, have an environmental debt to the rest of the world. The repayment must take place not only by easing up on resource use, but also by supporting Majority World industries in cleaning up their acts and by giving them the benefits of the latest technologies.

The West must also change the example it has set. It has made over-consumption seductive to the rest of the world, even though it has led to stress and the erosion of public spirit in the wealthiest of nations.

An old school friend who had recently come into money took me out to dinner at the local club in Indore. Towards the end of the evening and a bottle of rum downed between us, he said, 'Come back to India, Dinyar. Why are you wasting your time in Europe? In ten years time we'll be the future. Europe and America are fucked.' The violence of this statement, with its implicit assumption that I was living in Europe purely for material advantage, rendered me instantly stone sober.

For years, we Indians have been spiritual snobs, deriding the materialism of the West. Now the new rich could well be on their way to flipping the coin, holding consumption up as the prize. ■

Dinyar Godrej is a former **NI** editor

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1 *The Netherlands' National Environmental Policy Plan*, (Resource Renewal Institute Website, 1988) and *Environment Statistics 1996* (Eurostat, 1997). 2 *Sustainable Netherlands Revised*, (Friends of the Earth Netherlands, 1996); and Michael Carley and Philippe Spapens, *Sharing the World*, (Earthscan, 1998).

Seizing the reins

SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE THINGS INTO your own hands to green your city. What you do might not always be legal – but build up enough people-pressure and you may find the authorities having to follow your lead. **Jade Saunders** gleans examples from around the world.

NIGEL DICKINSON / STILL PICTURES

GREEN ALCHEMISTS

Tblisi, Russia

'I live here. It is a very ugly place. The whole area is made up of depersonalized concrete tower blocks, typical of modern Soviet cities,' says Gogi Zamukashvili.

Up until recently the area he shares with 70,000 other residents was rendered uglier still by the presence of a vast illegal rubbish dump that the local council was unprepared to remove.

Then, in 1997, Zamukashvili founded a local residents' group called Varketili. 'The response from the local community was amazing. The community was breaking down, people were alienated from their social and natural environment, they felt disempowered by the national political situation. We needed to bring back awareness of the rights and obligations of citizenship – to encourage people to take on community responsibilities and deal with their own local issues.'

> *I have learned to work within a community to activate people...*

The residents' group did just that. If the council would not remove the rubbish, they said, then why not lend residents the equipment so that they could do it themselves? When the council saw the extent of public support for the clean-up scheme, they complied. Many people got involved, including local schools. But the vision extended beyond just getting rid of the tip. The residents agreed to try to create a sustainable community park in its place.

In just two years the former rubbish dump has been transformed by local people into a park with community gardens, a tree-planting programme, an outdoor theatre and a sports ground. It's the heart and soul of the area: 'It is always full of people playing sports, walking or talking,' says Zamukashvili. Putting trees where once was rubbish has greatly improved air quality too.

Alienation-inducing tower-blocks, typical of so many former Soviet cities.

SEAN PRAGUE / PANOS PICTURES

'I have learned many wonderful lessons from being part of this project,' Zamukashvili concludes. 'I have learned to work within a community to activate people; how important it is for people to have a community identity – a sense of sharing and belonging – and how important it is for them to own the project.' ■

SUSTAINABLE RAVERS
Luton, UK

Exodus is not the most obvious sustainability crusader. Originating as a travelling sound-system, it was committed to little more than delivering free music to ravers. But the group is now involved in one of the most exciting and radical sustainable urban-regeneration projects in the UK.

Ex-train driver Guy Jenkins explained: 'Most of us were unemployed and loads of us were homeless. We were leaving derelict buildings after having parties in them, thinking, what a fucking shame, so much potential, sitting there rotting.'

In early 1993 they squatted two of the buildings and came up with the DIO (Do It Ourselves) philosophy, which is now central to every project the group are involved in. HAZ (Housing Action Zone) Manor and The Farm were established, providing homes for some of the group. Their horizons broadened to realizing other plans like establishing a communal organic garden, a sustainable water system and saving for a renewable energy system.

More than just a rave. Exodus is on to greater and greener things.

'We wanted to challenge all those negative ideas about squatters – we weren't the ones who had left the buildings to rot – we were doing everything we could to make them liveable again, and trying to be environmentally responsible – I've lost count of how many panes of glass we have fitted.'

The success of both squats gave the group confidence: 'We took on the authorities and won. First we said to the police: "in this space for a few hours, this community's laws apply, not yours." They had to let us party. Then we said to the council: "We will use these buildings better than you will, and we want to spend the housing benefit we are entitled to, on regenerating them – turning the money into a great place to live, not lining landlords' pockets." Eventually they had to let us.'

This confidence has been vital in the conception of their next project, The Ark Community Centre based on a council estate in Luton, just north of London. It had been the scene of rioting and severe social disintegration. 'We have put in a proposal to run the centre with 100 workers being paid benefit-level wages – by doing this we can unlock the voluntary potential of the people living on the estate – this is an assault on social alienation as well as poverty.'

We can't leave it to people who think regeneration is about repainting a few doors and promising computers to schools

And they have 'wonderful' plans, says Jenkins. 'We will have a non-profit community shop – provided with organic fresh veg by the farm – getting cheap fresh food to poor people, a wind generator making energy for the whole estate, cheap entertainment for kids – all sorts. The most important thing is to remove professionals who want to "provide" for us, but expect big wages – we can do all this much cheaper than anyone else. This is regeneration by the people, for the people – we are taking responsibility for our own environment – we want to make it liveable and sustainable. We can't leave it to people who think regeneration is about repainting a few doors and promising computers to schools. What people don't realize is that our philosophy addresses social, environmental and spiritual poverty, as well as problems with money.' ■

MARK EDWARDS / STILL PICTURES

URBAN GARDENERS
Havana, Cuba

When Havana teacher Maria Felix Bonome started cultivating the plot in front of her home in the suburb of Cojimar, it was quite a revolutionary thing to do. Up to 1989 urban agriculture was unheard of in Cuba. Half the food was imported from the Eastern Bloc and the rest came from the countryside.

'Although sustainable agriculture makes the best sense for the future,' says Maria, 'it came to Cuba quite accidentally.' The 'accident' in question was the collapse of the Soviet Union. While some were bemoaning the dire shortages that ensued, Bonome was busy creating a family co-operative urban garden (an *organiponico*).

We provide good, cheap food for people, and free food to those who need it

Soon others were following suit. At the instigation of the authorities the citizens of Havana began cultivating any available plots of land – including rooftops and balconies. The city authorities opened an urban agriculture department to support the growers by providing them with seed, technical advice and free land titles for cultivation only. A seed house network was instituted and chemical fertilizers and pesticides were outlawed.

Today around 20,000 inhabitants of Havana are directly involved in organic urban gardening and the results have been spectacular. Half of the island's food is now grown in the cities with Havana providing 30 per cent of its own vegetables. The health benefits of eating locally produced fresh food with improved vitamin A and C intakes are also evident.

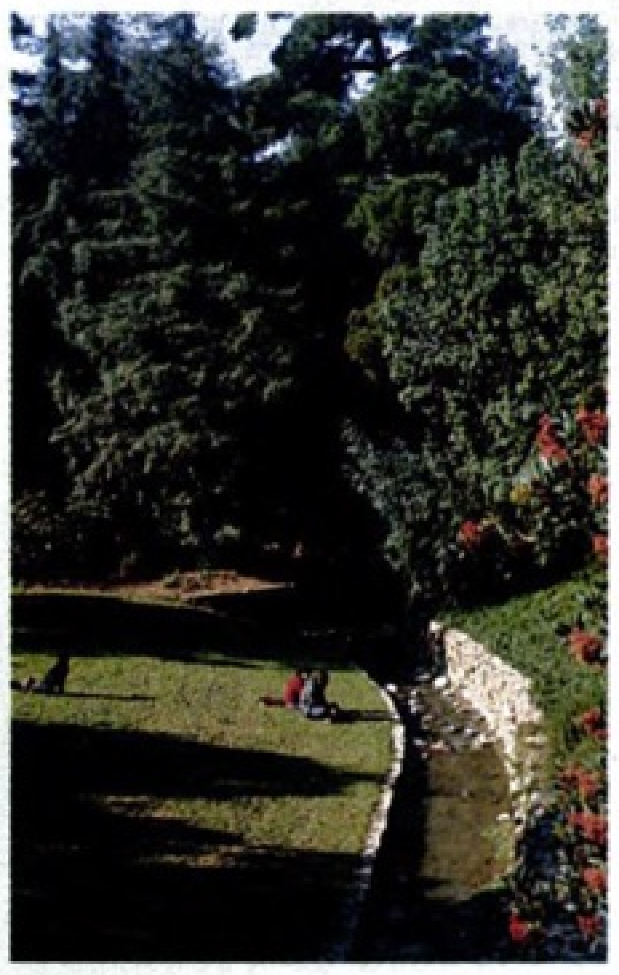
Bonome is justifiably proud of the success of her *organiponico* – the only one in Cojimar. 'We organized a brigade of family and friends and created it for ourselves. We needed only our hands. And we have a wonderful relationship with the people around us; we all work together to make our city a good place. We provide good, cheap food for people, and free food and care to those who need it.'

The urban garden also provides on-site work programmes for students from a local youth correctional facility, sending them home every day with free food. 'We give them an area in which to work and after showing them how to prepare the soil, to sow, to weed, to harvest, we leave them to do the work without overseeing them, although, of course, they can always come to us for advice or guidance. We never have problems with these kids. In fact, it's wonderful to see their excitement when the plants begin to grow and they see the results of their labour pop through the ground. They stay the whole day and often don't want to leave.' ■

FRUIT-TREE GUERRILLAS AND DE-DEVELOPERS
Berkeley, US

Rolling back North America's urban and suburban sprawl – a million acres are sacrificed to it each year – may seem like a hopeless task. But not to activist and fruit-tree planting guerrilla, Richard Register. And the movement he has mobilized, Ecocity Builders, has a flair for effective and eye-catching campaigns.

For example, there's the time when 400 people dug up part of Berkeley to release, from under its concrete grave, a river. Other eco-feats have included planting urban orchards overnight as well as depaving parking lots.


ERNEST R MANEUAL / CAMERA PRESS

In recent years, however, Ecocity Builders have taken a more 'legal' approach. They are going for 'a strategic legislative attack on the misuse of urban and suburban land,' says Register. This involves getting local authority planners to stretch their thinking – and their imaginations. They are currently campaigning for 'de-development' rights. This means that if developed land – which has, say, a natural creek running under it – were offered for redevelopment, it would be possible to buy those rights but to 'de-develop' it back to its natural state. The development planning permission could then be transferred to another, more suitable location.

400 people dug up part of Berkeley to release, from under its concrete grave, a river

Another campaign aims to overturn the Berkeley planning rules that insist that all new residential blocks need parking spaces. Not so, says Register. Why not have car-free apartments, inhabited by people who agree not to have a car, and who are repaid by cheaper rents?

The most ambitious plan is to bring various initiatives together in one area in the centre of town in a 'Heart of the City' campaign. 'We want to establish a car-free area with a natural creek and an urban orchard, with solar collectors and efficient resource use,' says Register. The whole area would be open to the public, with rooftop gardens and walkways between buildings. 'I want people to see how beautiful a place the city could be if we all reassessed the way we build and act.' ■

Jade Saunders is a journalist and eco-activist.

ACTION AND RESOURCES

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Sustainable Cities Trust PO Box 4490, Christchurch. Tel/fax: +64 3 377 8566; e-mail: trust@sustcities.org.nz **Green Party** PO Box 11652, Wellington. Tel: +64 4 934 3488; Fax: +64 4 499 2605; e-mail: www.greens.org.nz

AUSTRALIA

Urban Ecology Australia PO Box 3040, Grenfell Street, Adelaide, SA 5000. Tel/fax: +61 8 8232 4866; e-mail urbanec@metropolis. net.au Website: http://www.urbanecology.org.au See page10 for Whitmore Square Project. **Institute for Science and Technology Policy** Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, 6150. Tel: +61 9 360 2913; Fax: +61 9 310 5537; e-mail: newman@central.murdoch.edu.au See article on page 24. **Permaculture International** PO Box 6039, South Lismore, NSW 2480. Tel: +61 66 22 0020; Fax: +61 66 22 0579; Website: http:// www.nor.com.au **Friends of the Earth** 134 Broadway, NSW 2007. Tel: +61 2 281 4070; e-mail: chain@peg.apc.org

BRITAIN

Friends of the Earth 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. Tel: +44 171 490 1555; e-mail: info@foe.co.uk **International Institute for Enviroment and Development** 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H. Fax: +44 171 388 2826; e-mail:humans@iied.org. Good international analysis. Publishes the journal *Environment and Urbanization*. **London Ecology Unit** Bedford House, 125 Camden High St, London NW1 7JR. Tel: +44 171 485 9217. Advisory Service on all aspects of urban ecology from detailed design to broad issues of sustainability. Numerous publications. **The Land Is Ours** Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RQ. Tel: +44 1865 722016, e-mail www@tlio.demon.co.uk, website: www.oneworld.org/tlio/ Campaign and direct-action group.

CANADA

Canadian Environmental Network 300-945 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1Y 2X5. Tel: +1 613 728 9810; Fax: +1 613 728 2963; e-mail: cen@web.net Non-profit umbrella organization for some 1,500 environmental groups. Good starting point for information. **Green Communities Association** 4 Knox St, Peterborough, ON K9H 2A8. Tel: +1 705 745 7479; Fax: +1 705745 7294; e-mail: cmaynes@web.net A network of community-based organizations aiming to bring practical environmental solutions to urban and suburban development problems. **International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)** New City Hall, 8th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2. Tel: +1 416 392 1462. Fax: +1 416 392 1478.

US

Institute for Local Self-Reliance 2425 18th Street NW, Washington DC 20009. Tel: +1 202 232 4108; e-mail: ilsr@igc.org Website: www.ilsr.org Provides analysis and information on development strategies which extract maximum value from local resources combined with environmental sustainability. **Sustainable America** 42 Broadway, Ste 1740, New York, NY 10004. Tel: +1 212 269 9550; Fax: +1 212 269 9557; e-mail: sustamer@sanetwork.org Website: www.sanetwork.org National non-profit organization working on variety of issues including environmental sustainabilty and community design in urban, suburban and rural areas. **Ecocity Builders** 1678 Shattuck Ave, #66 Berkeley, CA 947094. Tel/fax: +1 510 649 1817; e-mail: ecocity@igc.org Website: www.citizen-planner.org/ecocitybuilders/ 7 or www.preservenet.com/EcoBuild.htm See article on this page for activities.

INTERNATIONAL

LOCAL AGENDA 21: Hundreds of groups around the world are working to improve their environments within the context of Rio Earth Summit resolutions. They can usually be contacted through local authorities.

WORTH READING...

The most lively, accessible and visually interesting book on the subject remains Herbert Girardet's *Gaia Atlas to Cities* (Gaia, London, 1996). **Peter Hall's** *Cities of Tomorrow* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996), makes a stimulating read. It's vigorous, opinionated, fascinating – but not, alas, as green as it might be! **Jane Jacobs'** 1960s classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Penguin, 1961) is still well worth a read, for its passion, sparkle and spike. At the more academic end, **Graham Haughton** and **Colin Hunter**'s sensible and comprehensive, *Sustainable Cities* (Jessica Kingsley, London, 1994) is recommended, and the forthcoming *Sustainable Cities: An Earthscan Reader* (Earthscan, London, 1999) edited by **David Satterthwaite**, is an excellent introduction to thinking in the field.

AND WORTH VIEWING...

Undercurrents, an excellent video magazine of protest and direct action. British-based but increasingly international in scope. Also co-ordinates camcorder actions network. Undercurrents, Box 30, 16B Cherwell Street, Oxford OX4 1BG, UK. Tel: +44 1865 203662. e-mail: underc@gn.apc.org

Hungarian citizens take to the streets of Budapest to protest against environmental damage.

CO, NO, SO₂
"ÁLDJON URAM TÉGED SZÉL ÖCSÉNK, LEVEGŐ, FELHŐ, JÓ ÉS RÚT IDŐ, KIK ÁLTAL ÉLTETED TE ALKOTÁSODAT." / ASSISI SZENT FERENC /

The **NI** Interview

Sein Win

Ruth Bradley chats with Burma's Prime-Minister-in-Exile

RTUH BRADLEY

TRIM, poised and precise, Sein Win is a wanted man back home in Burma. As are his brother and three cousins – all of them doing time for opposing the iron-fisted military dictatorship which runs their homeland. He grins as he recalls an encounter with a Burmese soldier who had escaped from prison where he had been tortured for defecting. 'And I'm not even a politician,' the young man quipped.

Sein Win *is* a politician. His crime was to get democratically elected in Burma in 1990 when he was just 47. It was the first time the military junta had allowed citizens to vote since it seized power in a 1962 coup. Sein Win's National League for Democracy (NLD) colleagues, led by another cousin, Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, won a landslide victory. Soon afterwards the junta, then called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), began to arrest election winners. It was obvious that the military had no intention of loosening its grip.

Those elected representatives who avoided imprisonment then hatched a plan to form an opposition government outside the country. They decided to meet secretly across the Thai border in an area controlled by the ethnic *Karen* who also opposed the Burmese regime.

When Sein Win left home he had no idea when he would next see his wife, then pregnant with their first child. From the capital, Rangoon, he snuck on to a bus to the southern part of the country. There, with the help of the local *Mon* people, he detoured past the junta's military checkpoints and waited for dark to board a small boat.

On the boat's port side lay open coastline: a perfect target for ambush from the shore. Starboard: open sea, where naval gunners lay in wait. 'We had to be silent all night,' recalls Sein Win. 'And I am not a swimmer.'

Back on land, the diminutive mathematics professor spent five days wading through jungle streams and climbing mountains, eventually reaching Manerplaw in Thailand. There he was appointed Prime-Minister-in-Exile before he and his pro-democracy colleagues scattered. Sein Win now lives in Washington DC while his cabinet is sprinkled through India, Thailand, Australia and the United States.

I met the 55-year-old Hamburg University graduate in Vancouver, another stop on his constant crusade to tell the world that Burma's regime still refuses to negotiate a return to civilian rule.

Without international investment the junta would not be able to maintain its forces or buy more weapons

Repression 'of the highest degree' continues. Since last August, says Sein Win, most NLD representatives who were still free have been forced to resign. Some were jailed. Others were told their land would be seized, leaving their families without food. 'Where pro-democracy advocates might be willing to go to jail, they may not be as willing to let their families starve,' says Sein Win. Even so he believes that democracy can soon be restored to Burma. For one thing, the quality of life in one of the world's poorest countries is 'getting worse'. And that spells trouble for the military regime which now calls itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Sein Win likens the situation to 1988 when spiralling inflation sparked civil unrest and more than 10,000 civilians were killed in peaceful demonstrations. Another 20,000 fled the country. Since then inflation has skyrocketed. Today, the black-market exchange rate for the US dollar is 60 times higher than the SPDC's so-called official rate. 'It was bad then,' says Sein Win, 'but today it is almost intolerable. The average urban worker can't even afford two meals a day.' Meanwhile the military lives lavishly, selling off the country's rich natural resources to international companies – including teak forests, gems and oil.

Another reason for optimism is the growing international attention paid to Burma. Governments in Canada, Australia, the US and the European Union are more open to accepting Burmese refugees and there is increasing unity around imposing economic sanctions. Sein Win says the next step is for the United Nations to take action on its 1992 resolution calling for the protection of human rights and the transfer of power to a civilian government.

'There is pressure from abroad on the military but we need even more,' he stresses. Especially now. 'The regime is rife with corruption and it can't even manage its own battalions. It is so desperately short of cash that economic sanctions could cripple the military.'

He also rejects the argument that foreign investment will boost the economy and help those most in need. 'It is the generals who make the money,' he laments. 'They just use it to build up the army.' Without international investment Sein Win argues that the junta would not be able to maintain its forces or buy more weapons.

So, despite a gruelling schedule that involves constant travel and little personal space, Sein Win has no plans to quit his campaign for freedom in Burma. Not yet anyway.

'Sometimes I'm tired and want a holiday,' he says. 'But if you start a movement you can never give it up unless you get results. Besides, my problems are nothing compared to those still back home.' ■

For more information: National Coalition Government Union of Burma, 815 15th St SW, Ste 910, Washington DC 20005.
Burma Project: www.soros.org/burma/burmorgs
Burmanetnews: www.freeburma.org

Reviews

books

We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families

by **Philip Gourevitch**
(Picador, ISBN 0 330 37120 7)

Country Of My Skull

by **Antjie Krog**
(Jonathan Cape, ISBN 0 224 05936 X)

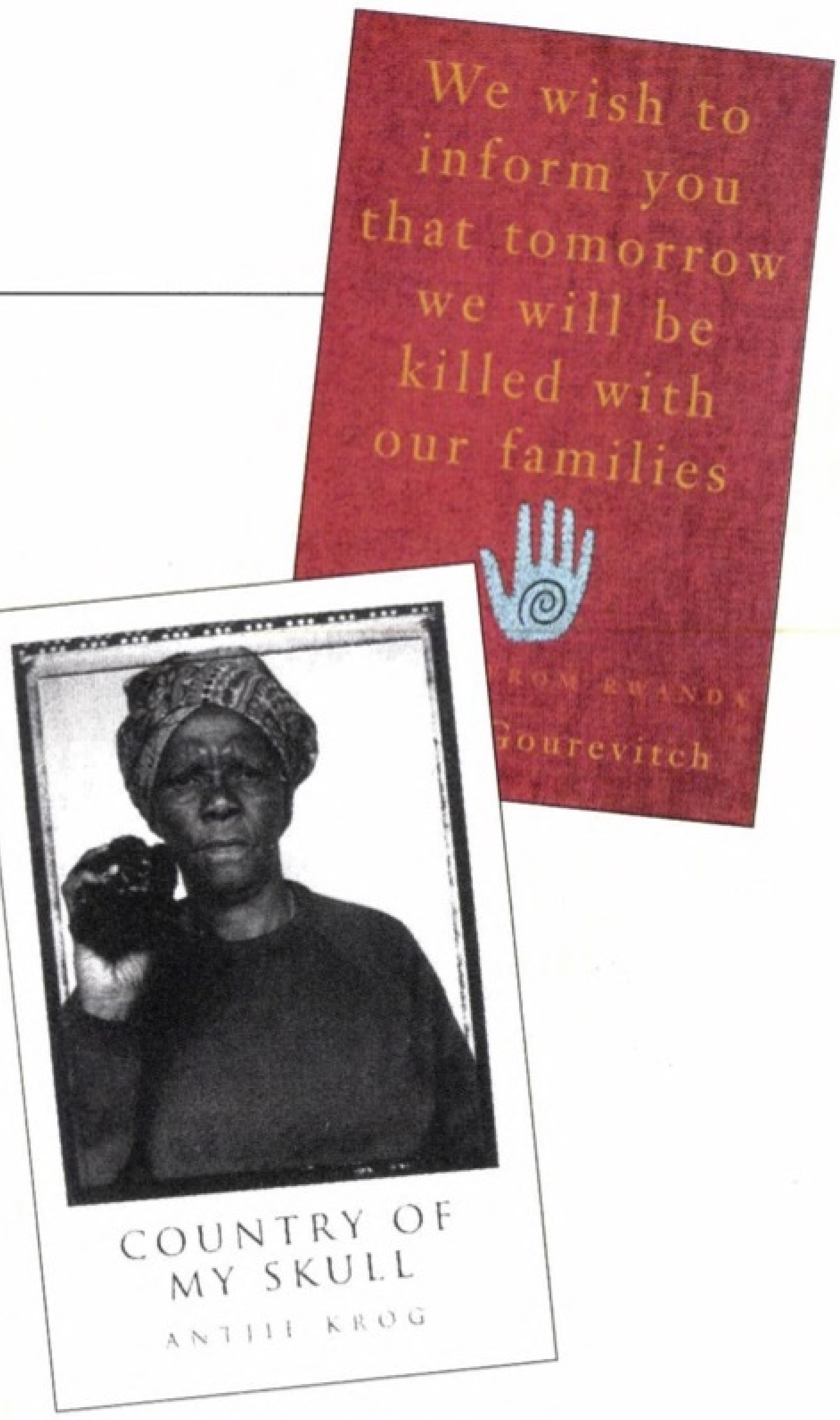
As I write, NATO planes are bombing Belgrade and Pristina and 'ethnic cleansing' is being inflicted on the Kosovans by the Serbs. Most likely the conflict will have escalated by the time you read these words. It is a sobering moment to read Philip Gourevitch's extraordinary and chilling account of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, an occasion on which the 'international community' manifestly failed a country and its people, with catastrophic consequences.

Gourevitch sets out to probe the logic of genocide; examining how such acts are possible and asking what it is in a society that makes communal killing a natural and normal response to social problems. He shows how the roots of the slaughter lay in the colonial history of Rwanda. Far from being – as was often claimed – an ancient tribal enmity, the rivalry between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority was a construct of the Belgian colonial regime, which fostered a Tutsi élite and used the Hutus as a downtrodden workforce. Here too was shaped the ethos of authority and compliance, a community ethic which was to lead inexorably to Hutu 'work parties' whose daily duty was to kill Tutsis. Genocide became 'an exercise in community building' and the very antithesis of a collapse of civil order; the massacres were a product of order, following decades of authoritarianism, indoctrination and propaganda from Rwanda's Hutu Power leaders. As Gourevitch points out, although the slaughter was a low-tech affair – done largely by machete – it was accomplished at astonishing speed. More than 800,000 people were killed in less than a hundred days in the most efficient mass killing since Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Gourevitch's anger at the international response to the genocide is palpable when writing of the 'relief effort' which swung into action following the invasion of the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front and the collapse of the genocidal regime. When the conflict spilled over Rwanda's borders, the refugee camps were manipulated and controlled by the *interahamwe*, the murderous Hutu militia, and, in a colossal miscalculation by the international agencies, aid was largely directed towards the perpetrators of the atrocity who had fled the country, while the survivors inside Rwanda were left to fend for themselves. Furthermore – in a reversal of the anticipated obligation to remember – they were regarded as wearisome for being unable to put the past behind them and 'move forward'.

Philip Gourevitch has written a heartfelt, deeply distressing and immensely important book which deserves the widest possible readership. The reminder of just what we are capable of, for good and ill, could not be more timely for, in the words of Primo Levi: 'It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say. It can happen, and it can happen everywhere.'

Politics ☆☆☆☆☆


We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families
ROM RWANDA
ourevitch
COUNTRY OF MY SKULL
ANTJIE KROG

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which convened in Spring 1996 and concluded work last year, is often advanced as a paradigm of how to begin repairing a devastated society. In **Country Of My Skull**, the poet and journalist Antjie Krog has given us a clear and eloquent narrative of the setting up of the Commission, under the chairing of the redoubtable Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the methodical way in which, day on day, it attempted to lead all South Africans to a consideration of their shared, traumatic past. Antjie Krog has woven together strands of direct testimony by both victims and perpetrators, a lively chronology of the hearings and a more personal, subjective diary of the period. The book is much more than a dull trudge through the facts and is greatly enlivened by a poetic lightness of touch. It is not a slight to say that **Country Of My Skull** has neither the intensity nor the urgency of Gourevitch's book. Reconstruction is, by its nature, a messy, complex and fragmentary process and Antjie Krog has delved admirably into the inner workings of South Africa's unique approach to healing itself and forging a whole country from the dross of apartheid.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆ PW

music

EPs

by **Robert Wyatt**
(Hannibal HNCD 1440)

Start Again

by **Pete Moser**, **Adrian Mitchell**
(MMM1 CD)

Attempting to sum up Robert Wyatt's contribution to pop is a difficult job. Not to suggest that the man's career is anyway over – this covetously nice boxed set of five EPs disproves any such thing. Wyatt, a singer and writer who came to prominence in the 1960s with the British band Soft Machine, developed a career which combined artistry with an unswerving passion for social justice. This is reflected in many of the pieces collected here and while Wyatt has always been outspoken in his Marxist sympathies he has never been doctrinaire.

The saddest voice in the world: Robert Wyatt

This collection takes as its starting point the end of the Softies in 1971 and traces a trajectory up to the present day with selections from last year's album *Shleep* plus various remixes. Most of the material is available elsewhere on Wyatt's numerous releases, but the beauty of **EPs** is in its size. These 'extended plays' – each one less than an album, but more than a single – offer a format that allows for a short, concentrated exploration around a thematic grouping. There's a 1974 cover of 'I'm A Believer'; the shimmering sorrow of 'Shipbuilding', an eloquent indictment of Thatcher and the Falklands war in just minutes; and tracks from the 1982 film *Animals*. Wyatt's music can be sparse, but it's also simultaneously vulnerable and taut; Sakamoto had a point when he described his as 'the saddest voice in the world'. That is, in a sense, the beauty of Wyatt's work. Even when he's on a roll – delivering a mighty cover of Victor Jara's 'Te Recuerdo, Amanda' or 'Amber And The Amberines', written after the US invasion of Grenada – there's the tenderness of farewell in each of them. Hear this for the songs, the passion, the players: Brian Eno, Fred Frith and Paul Weller all make appearances. Wyatt's one of a kind.

Politics ☆☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

It's not often that the **New Internationalist** is cited as an inspiration behind a CD, but **Start Again** does – rather disarmingly – precisely that. Prompted initially by an **NI** issue on human rights, poet Adrian Mitchell and musician Pete Moser assembled soloists, musicians and children's choirs from Manchester, Morecambe and London to realize a project celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. Divided into three parts, their work has a strong stage presence – enhanced perhaps by the musical influence of shows such as *Godspell* or *Hair*. Lead vocalists Jan Ponsford and Tyndale Thomas turn in some good performances; the interplay between solos and choirs effectively managed and **Start Again**'s energy cannot be denied.

A CHORAL SONG CYCLE
START AGAIN
WORDS BY ADRIAN MITCHELL
MUSIC BY PETE MOSER

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆ LG

Start Again is available from: MMM, The Hothouse 13-17 Devonshire Road, Morecambe, LA3 1QS, UK (01524 831997) for £11.50 inclusive of P&P.

STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆
Poor	☆

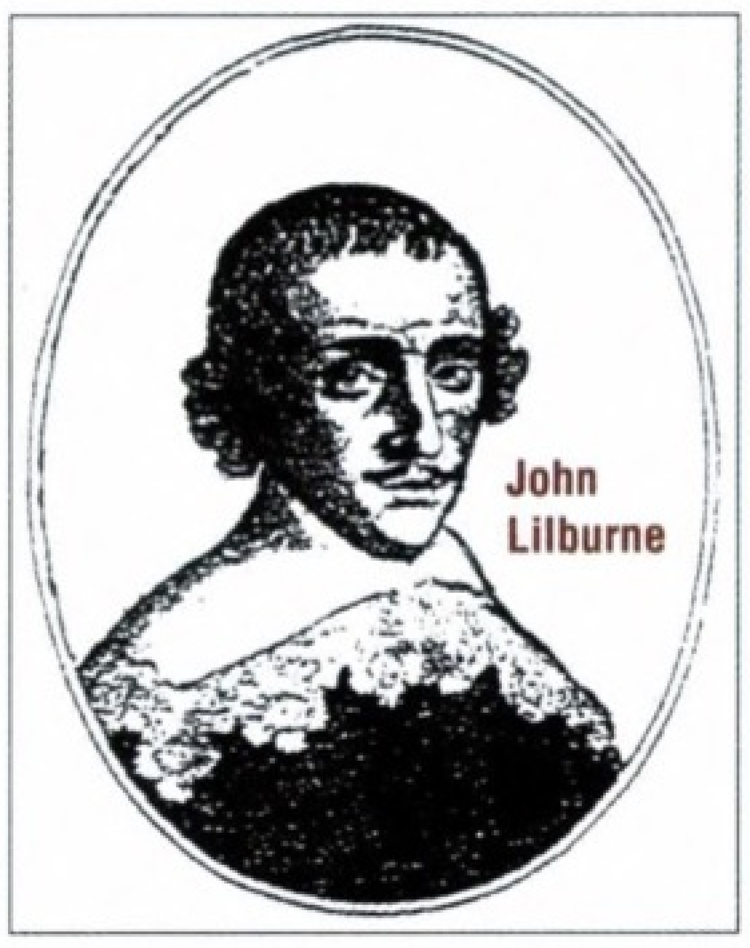
THE **CLASSIC**

The World Turned Upside Down

... being the book about the revolutionaries of 350 years ago who inspire activists today.

Regicide has quite gone out of fashion. On a sunny January morning in 1649 the forces of Parliament, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, beheaded the English king Charles I. The accepted view is that this clash of monolithic forces was a straightforward power struggle, categorized by Sellar and Yeatman in their satirical *1066 And All That* as 'Cavaliers: Wrong but Romantic; Roundheads: Right and Repulsive'.

Throughout a lifetime of groundbreaking scholarship on the English Civil War, historian Christopher Hill has laboured to challenge these simplistic notions. He has shown convincingly how, inside this rebellion of landowners and the middle class, was another revolution: one with roots stretching back to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and which prefigured such twentieth-century direct action movements as the Poll Tax campaign, anti-road protesters and land-rights activists.



For a brief period in the mid-seventeenth century there flowered an abundance of movements, sects and radical groups, questioning the institutions and dogmas of their society, offering new and challenging economic and political solutions. These groups differed widely in their beliefs and tactics but all shared the view that the defeat of the King was not the end but the beginning of social change. It is the story of these people – Quakers, Ranters, Levellers and Diggers – that Christopher Hill tells so splendidly in his book, **The World Turned Upside Down**.

Who were these men and women with such a powerful vision of a transformed society? The Leveller movement grew out of the anti-enclosure agitation of the early part of the century and it had a strong presence in the New Model Army. Leveller pamphleteers took advantage of the newly liberated printing presses and a torrent of literature poured forth, arguing for a more representative government, a much wider franchise and a fairer division of the land.

The most famous of these pamphlets, John Lilburne's *An Agreement of the Free People of England* became the much-discussed manifesto of the Levellers and a rallying cry for both the masses and the radical elements among the army. Lilburne and his fellow pamphleteers Richard Overton, Thomas Prince and William Walwyn were imprisoned in the Tower of London by Parliament and Lilburne was tried for treason. A campaign was started to discredit them and their ideas. Cromwell himself branded them 'a despicable and contemptible generation of men; persons little differing from beasts'. There was a bloody and brutal purge of Leveller regiments and several small rebellions were crushed. Despite their failure to implement their programme of reform, Leveller ideas remained widely popular among the common people and their thinking was the basis of much of what followed in subsequent years.

The Diggers – who called themselves True Levellers – emerged in the aftermath of the defeat of the Levellers. On 1 April 1649 a group of Diggers occupied a patch of common land in Surrey and began to build cottages and plant crops. Similar settlements sprang up in other parts of the country. Their philosophy was summed up by Gerrard Winstanley: '... not only this Common or Heath should be taken in and manured by the People, but all the Commons and waste ground in England, and in the whole World, shall be taken in by the People in righteousness, not owning any Property; but taking the Earth to be a Common Treasury, as it was first made for all.'

Though never as numerous as the Levellers, the Diggers represented a much more direct challenge to the rights of property and land ownership, and all means were used to suppress them. Their cottages were torn down, their crops destroyed and they were harried wherever they attempted to settle. In some of the worst famine years of the century, their heroic attempt to build a new and fair society on patches of waste ground was always going to be doomed. But, as the songwriter Leon Rosselson says in his eulogy to these brave individuals: 'They were dispersed, but still the vision lingers on.'

Wherever people strive for a better world, they carry forward the Diggers' belief in justice and community. Christopher Hill rightly salutes them as 'those nameless radicals who foresaw and worked for – not our modern world, but something far nobler, something yet to be achieved – the upside-down world.'

The 'Levellers' and 'Diggers' dream of a just and equable world remains as valid today as in 1649. The work to achieve it is carried on by other hands and in many and surprising places, as predicted by the Quaker Edward Burrough: 'Our principles you can never extinguish, but they will live for ever, and enter into other bodies to live and speak and act.' ■

The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution by Christopher Hill, is published by Penguin, 1975 (ISBN 0140137327).

Peter Whittaker

Reviews

film

The dash from school in modern Tehran.

Children of heaven

Directed and written by **Majid Majidi**
(World distribution: Miramax)

I'm hard pressed to think of a lovelier film ever produced about children. Ali, the nine-year-old at the centre of this Iranian feature, is marvellous and, like the long line of urchins who have graced world cinema, his pain and confusion can melt the hardest hearts. But **Children of heaven** is also a profoundly disturbing film because it tries hard to paint an affable face on the harsh body politic of modern Iran.

Facing regimentation and patriarchy Ali and his younger sister, Zahra, navigate tiny streets and tightly restricted lives. A search for Zahra's lost shoes – torn but still pink – takes us on a journey into the larger society. As in the Italian classic, *Bicycle Thieves*, the loss of an ordinary but essential object forces a crisis almost impossible for a poor family to overcome. Brother and sister share one last pair of beat-up sneakers. Forced by fear to act in secret, away from their father's wrath, they draw closer together and into contact with others even poorer.

Against this grim, sometimes comic children's dilemma, director Majidi bathes the streets of old Teheran in a warmth of colour and glowing light. Throughout the school yard and the old city's many open spaces, mature, cooling trees soften the harsh regimentation that rules civic life. The children dash from home to school along narrow but immaculate streets. Exhilarating camera-work that features lengthy and rapid tracking shots follow the running children. It's a strong visual motif that builds to a climax mixed with sadness and comedy.

For the majority of film viewers in the West, weaned on the values of a secular state and the goal of equal rights for women, Iran presents some real problems. How can the land of the Ayatollahs, even now in its more moderate 'face to the West' guise, sell us the picture of a socially tolerant society? A nagging scepticism makes me question any film acceptable to the Iranian state.

Above all, Ali and Zahra's story illustrates good behaviour for children. Boys take note. It's your duty to respect and protect your sister. But is this respect meant to provide a moral example in a country sadly lacking rights for girls or is the filmmaker trying to show us an Iran that already exists? What's the connection here with other recent Iranian films – such as *Leila* – sharply critical of the repression faced by women and girls?

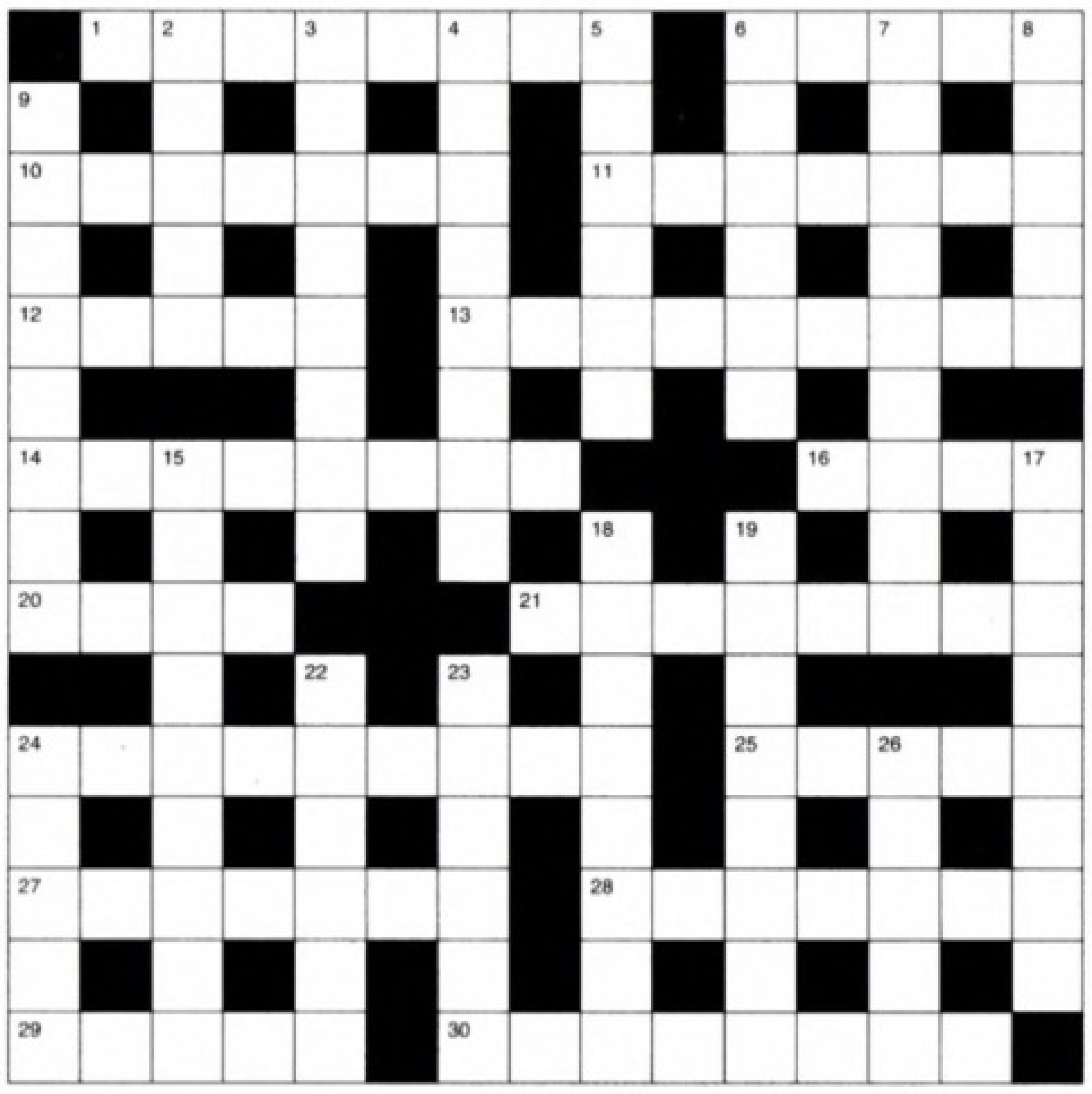
Ali fears adults in a manner perhaps incomprehensible to middle-class Western kids. This is ironic because every adult in the film behaves with kindness and concern for others. From the father, to the strict school principal and the rich old man in need of a gardener, all melt from their gruff exteriors to eagerly display warm hearts. In **Children of heaven** men at all levels of Iranian society do the right thing. This makes a great film for children needing a good exemplar of brother-sister love. It may prove a little harder for adults, thinking about Iran, to swallow .

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆ PS

Reviewers: **Louise Gray, Peter Whittaker, Peter Steven**
Reviews editor: **Vanessa Baird**

The **NI** Crossword

33 by Axe



CRYPTIC

Across

1 Trouble in Sudan was the result of an instrument fashioned in a Gulf state (8)
6 Australasian base for rubbish film studio (5)
10 It's injected at home, usually – Luis has the name for it! (7)
11 Did Americans bomb, at last cancelling a little invasion here? (7)
12 Primate is cut short by a New Zealander with East End beginnings (5)
13,15 Awful scandal – hybrids working with crumbling clay between a rock and a hard place near Messina (6,3,9)
14 Russia's last ill-fated star (8)
16 Reported snags at hated river (4)
20 Look at the attributes of the Turkish (a Hashemite connection), for the supreme leader (4)
21 North-south leeway arranged for the Methodist (8)
24 'E's read you, by the sound of it, round to the last letter as claimed by the Dutch! (6,3)
25 The team bend over backwards at first for Italian Prime Minister... (5)
27 ...but, in Rome, a leader long ago claimed first class backing when in the navy (7)
28 Don't take up the franchisee's option (7)
29 Dreaded Jamaican's little address... (5)
30 ...at the Western interior of the island, has alternative name in Caribbean language (8)

Down

2 Exploded once in Peru, sounding like one in Tolkien's range! (5)
3 Scottish port where every German boat capsized on the water (8)
4 US version of Pamplona's Bull Run in conflict? (8)
5 Name a painter in Japan (6)
6 She sings some jazz after arranging a quiet meal (6)
7 Rugby score is the foundation for paeans performed by men of the country... (9)
8 ...a country off Finland, actually (5)
9 Fruits of the forest gull found in shells (3,5)
15 See 13
17 Chinese region's team from 25 heading group ninja involvement (8)
18 Source of sweetness a rare turn-up following Democratic primaries! (8)
19 Boycott waterway serving the Ukraine? (5,3)
22 Flight of man is over and above the Royal Artillery soldier's core situation (6)
23 Nelson's home is, alternatively, a crazier-sounding place (6)
24 20 of Afghanistan takes hard-hearted position in Congo's never-ending situation (5)
26 Lawrence's essay on the Red Sea position puts the Queen roughly into the three A's and a B bracket (5)

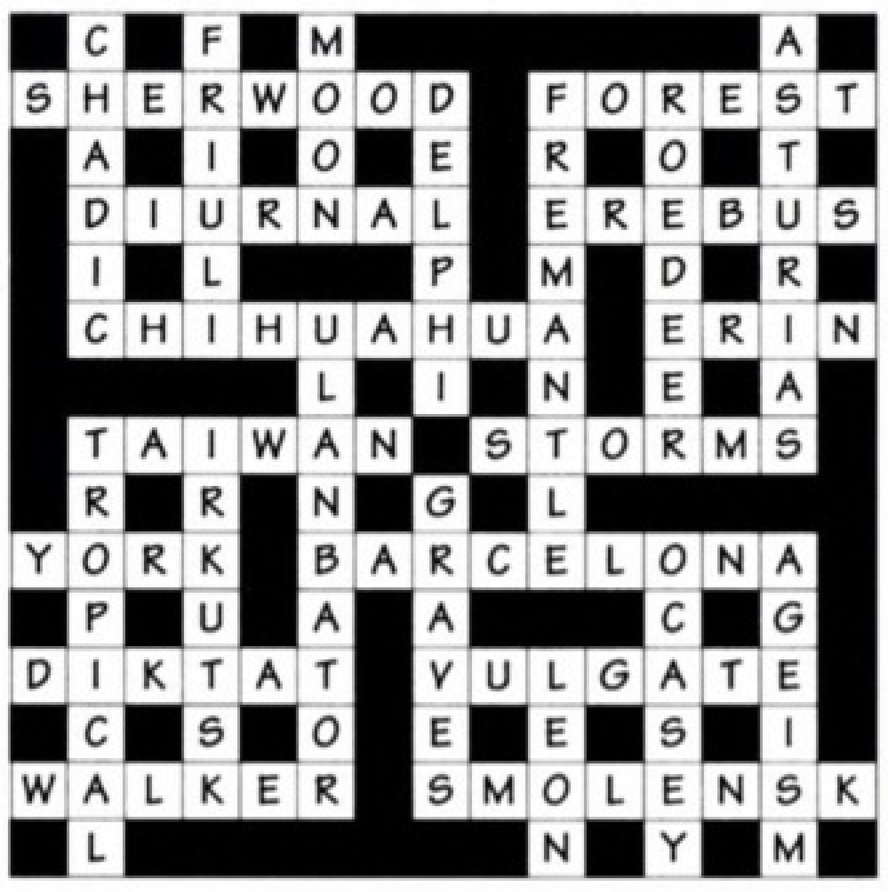
QUICK

Across

1 Sudan's second city, near the confluence of the White and Blue Nile (8)
6 Eastern section of the island of New Guinea (5)
10 Protein hormone important in regularizing glucose in the blood (7)
11 Former British colony, the southernmost of the Windward Islands (7)
12 Pan troglodytes, in short (5)
13,15 Combined threat to ancient mariners in the Strait of Messina (6,3,9)
14 Patron saint of pawnbrokers, clerks and scholars – more popularly known by his diminutive name (8)
16 River of the infernal regions (4)
20 Persian for king, ruler in many Eastern countries of the past (4)
21 Original Methodism, named after its founder brothers (8)
24 Reclaimed land in the Netherlands, part of which is the Ijsselmeer (6,3)
25 Italian Prime Minister charged with receiving bribes in 1995 (5)
27 Roman Emperor, 117-138 AD (7)
28 Forbear, renounce (7)
29 Popularly-named cult member who believes in the divine being of Haile Selassie (5)
30 Amerindian people banished from the Antilles by the Caribs (8)

Down

2 Dormant Andean volcano near Arequipa in Peru (5822m) (5)
3 Fishing- and ferry-port on Loch Broom, north-west Scotland (8)
4 Where the Battles of Bull Run (1861 and 1862) were fought, now a suburb of Washington DC (8)
5 Japan's fourth city, site of the Astuta Shrine (6)
6 Mediterranean stew, coloured by saffron (6)
7 Provincial hoi-polloi (9)
8 Islands forming an autonomous area of Finland, but where the main language is Swedish (5)
9 Examples of coniferous inflorescence (3,5)
15 See 13
17 Autonomous region of north-west China with an area larger than France and Britain combined (8)
18 River and region of Guyana, giving its name to a type of rum (8)
19 Almost totally-landlocked extension of the Mediterranean (5,3)
22 Flight, particularly that of Muhammad from Mecca in 622 (6)
23 African name for South Africa (6)
24,20 Afghan supreme ruler until overthrown in 1973 (5,4)
26 Jordanian port on the Red Sea (5)



ENDPIECE

Enemy of the people

The AIDS epidemic in South Africa is reaching frightening proportions – and the struggle against it, says **Suzanne LeClerc-Madlala**, is being fatally undermined by the 'gendering' of blame.

In the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa it is estimated that between 20 and 30 per cent of the population is infected with the HIV virus. In the next five to ten years the levels of morbidity and mortality due to AIDS are set to overtake all other causes of illness and death combined. Most provincial hospitals are already full to overflowing with AIDS patients and are turning many of them away to face communities that are unprepared to accept them in their midst – especially if they are women.

Women have long been blamed for all manner of misfortunes that befall African communities. Many of the strongly patrilineal societies of Southern Africa – including the Zulu – still associate women with witchcraft. In KwaZulu-Natal, witch-hunting is not so readily acknowledged, nor is it a cause for political concern. Here, politically inspired terror is what holds the province in the grip of fear. Nevertheless, a recent wave of attacks on women living with HIV/AIDS bears all the hallmarks of modern-day witch-hunting.

The killing of Gugu Dlamini in one of Durban's largest African townships just before Christmas last year sent shock-waves through the country. Even President Mandela added his voice to the general condemnation of a brutal and criminal act. Gugu's mistake was to take seriously the call by campaigners and politicians for people living with HIV/AIDS to come forward. Shortly after speaking about her condition at a township meeting, Gugu was assaulted and left for dead outside her home. She died in hospital soon afterwards. Death threats to her fellow AIDS educators soon followed. Telephone threats and visits to the homes of these women by strange, heavily armed men asking for their whereabouts caused many women in the province who had 'come out' to go into hiding.

Along with accusations that they 'disgraced' their community by disclosing their HIV status, allegations were made that some of these women had been deliberately spreading the disease. In the case of one 19-year-old HIV-positive campaigner, the primary accuser was an ex-boyfriend. The National Youth Commission had to be called in to investigate and show their support by advising people to ignore such 'smear campaigns'.

The distinct impression one gets from reading media reports is that only women carry the virus. What about the men? Certainly some have 'come out' and some have been railed against. But the communities' response to them has been nothing in comparison with the level of intimidation and brutality that women experience. Rather, the general feeling towards men is one of pity, compassion and sympathy. They are regarded as the victims of a disease transmitted by women.

The consequences of this 'gendering' of the epidemic are just beginning to be felt. In an official press statement Pat Hlongwane, spokesperson for the National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS, said that the time was coming close 'when communities will start necklacing people'. As in the 'total onslaught' era of apartheid in the 1980s, police are uninterested in preventing the attacks. Their response has been to advise the threatened women to 'wait until something happens'. For Gugu Dlamini, waiting until something happened brought her death.

South Africa prides itself on progressive gender legislation, with an official Commission on Gender, various Gender Desks in different government ministries, recent labour legislation granting maternity benefits, breastfeeding rights and laws to guard against workplace and domestic abuse. With the seventh-largest number of women parliamentarians in the world, the Government is proud of its pro-women achievements. But official lip-service has yet to be matched by on-the-ground change in the lot of South Africa's poor, black women.

Modern-day witch-hunting of women with HIV/AIDS is a glaring reminder of gender inequality that is deeply entrenched and sanctioned by tradition in many of South Africa's communities. Considering that the country as a whole is set to experience a wave of AIDS-related deaths that could cripple the economy and severely test health and social services that are already in a state of collapse, terrorizing and attacking HIV-positive women may just be the start of a new trend in the gross abuse of women's rights.

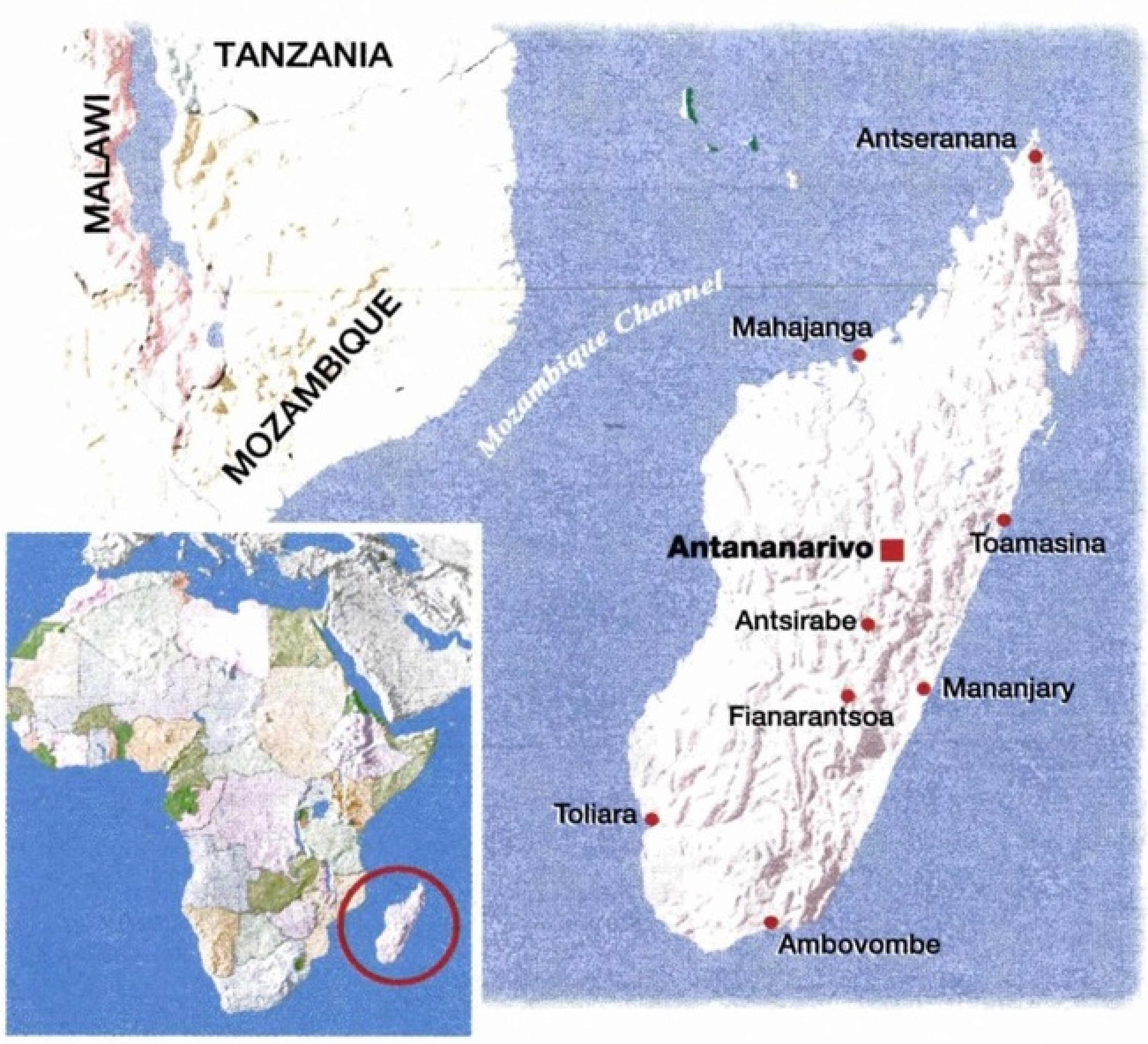
In the words of one young woman living with HIV: 'There is nothing we can do except pray to God. Our men will always blame us, no matter what. I just keep quiet.' Keeping quiet is surely one of the most lethal responses of all. ■

Suzanne LeClerc-Madlala teaches in the Department of Anthropology, University of Durban-Westville.

Now hear this! Women AIDS educators get a hostile response from men.

GISELE WULFSOHN / PANOS PICTURES

Country profile Madagascar



In a country where the shortened name of one king was Andrianampoinimerina, Jackson is not the sort of name you expect to find in a remote village. But in south-east Madagascar, in a hut made of forest hardwood and thatched with ravenala leaves, lives the Jackson family. I visit them to pay my respects after the death of the family patriarch. The total contents of their hut comprise a woven raffia floormat, some rolled dirty rags for pillows and a small fire fuelled by forest timber.

Three new wells in their village mean cleaner water to drink, but for the Jacksons as for the other 10 million rural dwellers, not much has changed since the advent of democracy in 1992/3.

Madagascar was a French colony for most of the century. French encroachment started in 1642 and continued on and off until 1896 when they finally exiled Queen Ranavalona III and declared Madagascar a colony. It ended when the French packed their bags on 26 June 1960 and an independent republic was born.

By 1975, when a coup within the military eventually threw up Lieutenant-Commander Didier Ratsiraka as head of state, Madagascar had withdrawn from the Paris-orientated Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) zone and closed all French military bases, causing the mass exodus of the remaining French farmers. Ratsiraka then began 'the experiment', otherwise known as the Second Republic. Banks, insurance companies and other major businesses were nationalized without compensation and all ties with France were severed. The communist ideal became Madagascar's guiding light.

By the 1980s, however, after years of emphasizing self-sufficiency and creating obstacles to foreign private investment, Ratsiraka had decided such outside help was essential. He introduced austerity measures which attracted IMF dollars.

By early 1991 a wave of demonstrations and strikes were demanding Ratsiraka's resignation. The killing of peaceful demonstrators by the Presidential Guard in front of Ratsiraka's opulent palace in August 1991 was the beginning of the end: a new constitution was unveiled and 17 years of dictatorship ended in February 1993 when Albert Zafy became the first democratically elected President of Madagascar.

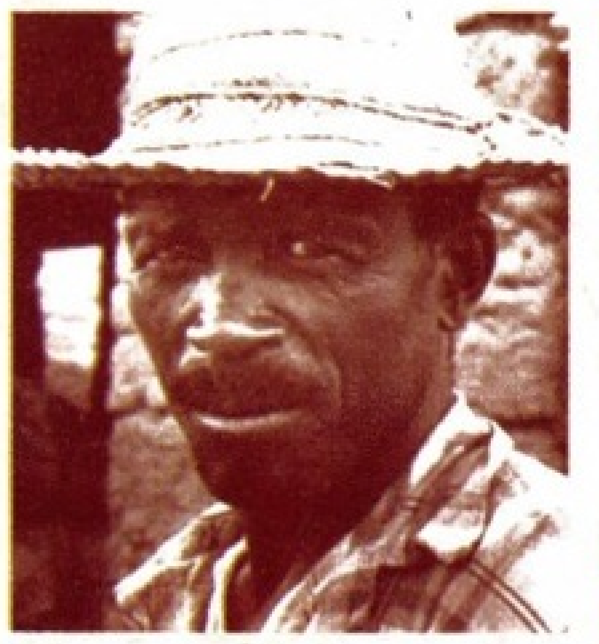
Although real per-capita income has fallen over the past two decades by more than 40 per cent, the latest wave of financial and social reforms – a $118-million loan package was agreed with the IMF in 1996 – do seem to be bringing slow improvement, at least in the cities. Inflation was running at 64 per cent in 1995; today it is around 3 per cent.

The Government's objectives are a recovery of private investment (apparently working in the cities) and a reduction in poverty (manifestly not happening in the countryside). The Government says it is concentrating on basic health services, primary education and public security. Yet in the Jacksons' village there is no state-provided healthcare, no electricity, the bridges have been broken for years, corruption is rife and the village president retains control by fear of witchcraft.

When Zafy was impeached in 1996 for abuse of power, tricky old Ratsiraka returned from exile in France. To the astonishment of many he was re-elected, and to this day the new Ratsiraka – reborn as a 'humanist ecologist' – remains President. The new constitution says the President can only have two terms. The second fall of Ratsiraka is set in stone – but 'will he go?' remains the question. ■

Brett Massoud

AT A GLANCE



Leaders President Didier Ratsiraka; Prime Minister Pascal Rakotomavo.

Economy GNP per capita $250 (France $26,270). When last profiled in 1985 the GNP per capita stood at $320.
Monetary unit: Franc Malgache (FMg).
Main exports: coffee, vanilla, prawns, cloves, cotton cloth.
External debt: $4,175 million, or $263 per person.
Debt service: 7% of exports.

People 15.8 million.

Health Infant mortality 96 per 1,000 live births (Tanzania 92, France 5). Maternal mortality 490 per 100,000 live births (Malawi 620, France 20). Health conditions have deteriorated, with malaria increasing amongst the poor.

Environment The rivers bleed red mud into the sea as the inland plains erode after massive deforestation: Madagascar remains one of the world's top conservation priorities.

Culture The Malagasy population is a broad composite of Malayo-Polynesian, Arab and African ethnic groups. The Merinas are about 20% of the total and the Betsimisaraka 10%. Tiny French, Indian and Chinese minorities.
Religion: Christian 51%; traditional beliefs 47%; Muslim 2%. Many hold traditional and Christian beliefs in parallel.
Languages: Malagasy and French. There are also local dialects such as Hova.

Sources: *World Guide 1999/2000; State of the World's Children 1999; Africa Review 1998; Azafady Village Health Survey Aug 1998; FAO/World Bank; Encarta 1999; IMF.*

Previously profiled September 1985

NI star rating

EXCELLENT	★★★★★
GOOD	★★★★
FAIR	★★★
POOR	★★
APPALLING	★

STAR RATINGS

INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★
The urban middle class is growing but the poor are staying poor.
1985 ★★

SELF-RELIANCE ★★
Cereal (rice) imports are at their highest since 1988 and food aid hasn't been higher since 1992.
1985 ★★

POSITION OF WOMEN ★★★
The new constitution prohibits sex discrimination but also abortion.
1985 ★★★★

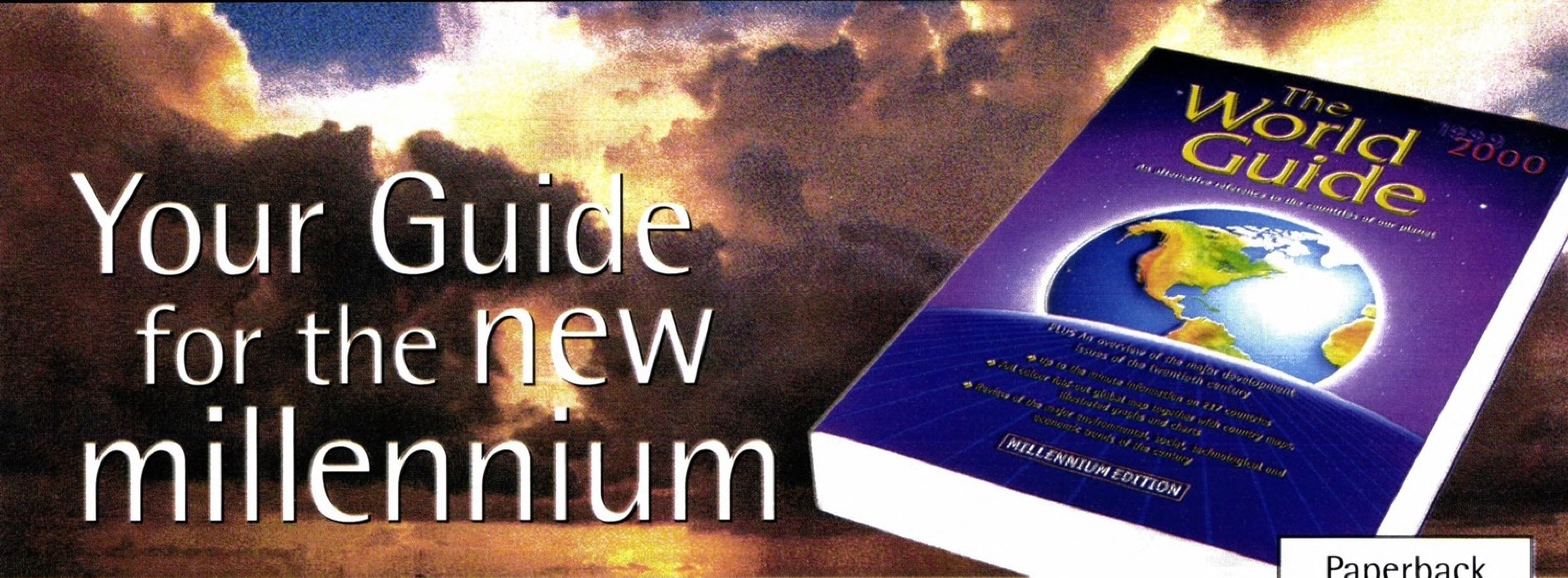
LITERACY ★★
Has declined in the last decade to 46%, compared with regional neighbours Comoros 57% and Tanzania 68%.
1985 ★★★

FREEDOM ★★★★
Human rights and freedom of speech are protected by law, but in practice some minor violations occur.
1985 ★★★

LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★
58 years. Compares with an average for sub-Saharan Africa of 51 and with 79 years in the former colonial power, France.
1985 ★★

POLITICS

NI ASSESSMENT ★★ The Government is barely touching the rural population. The main abuse of human rights is institutional rather than individual: the constitution removes all rights of the *Fokonolona* (rural people) to protect their environment, land, ceremonial heritage if such protection is against 'the common interest' (for example if a mining company wants their land).



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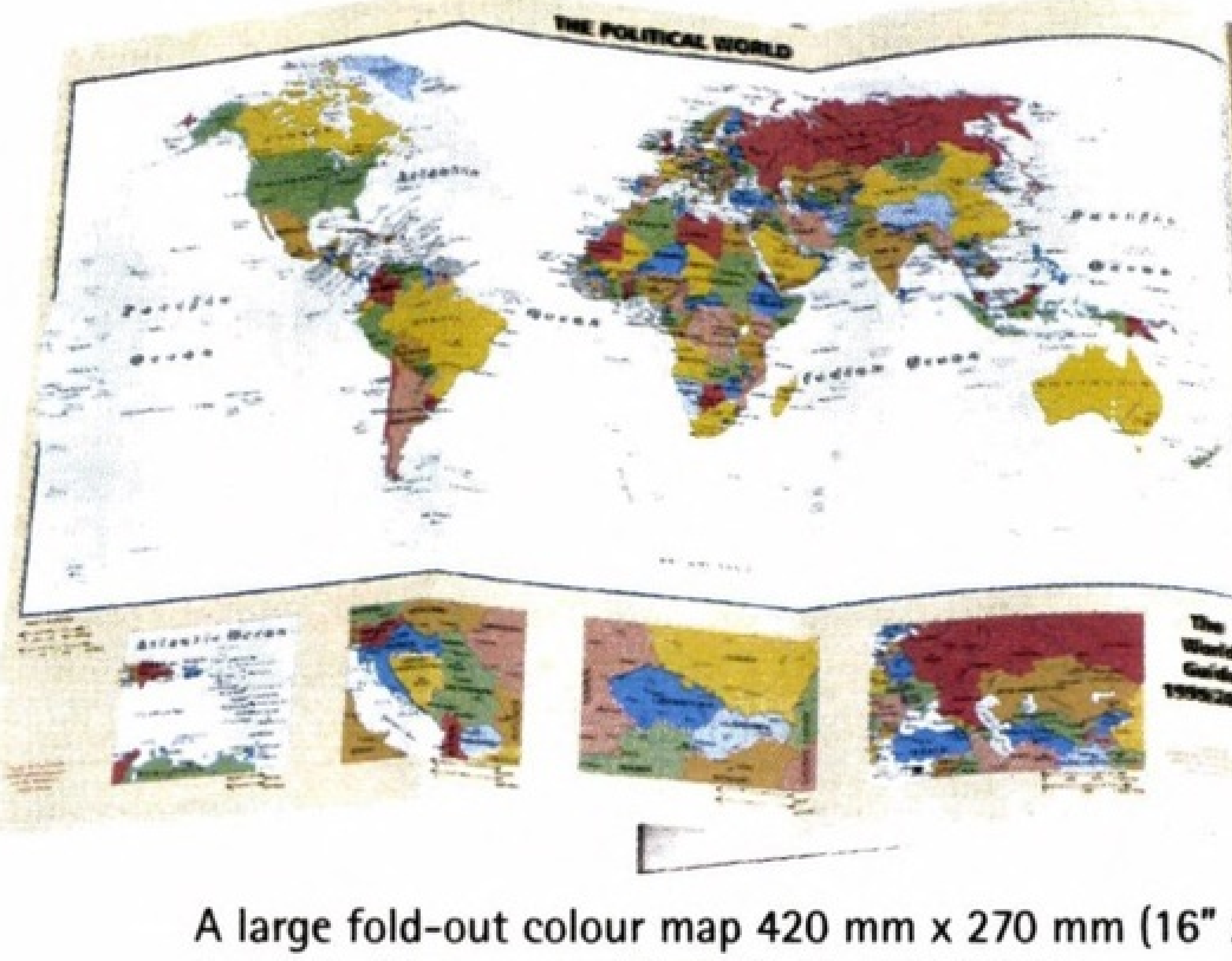

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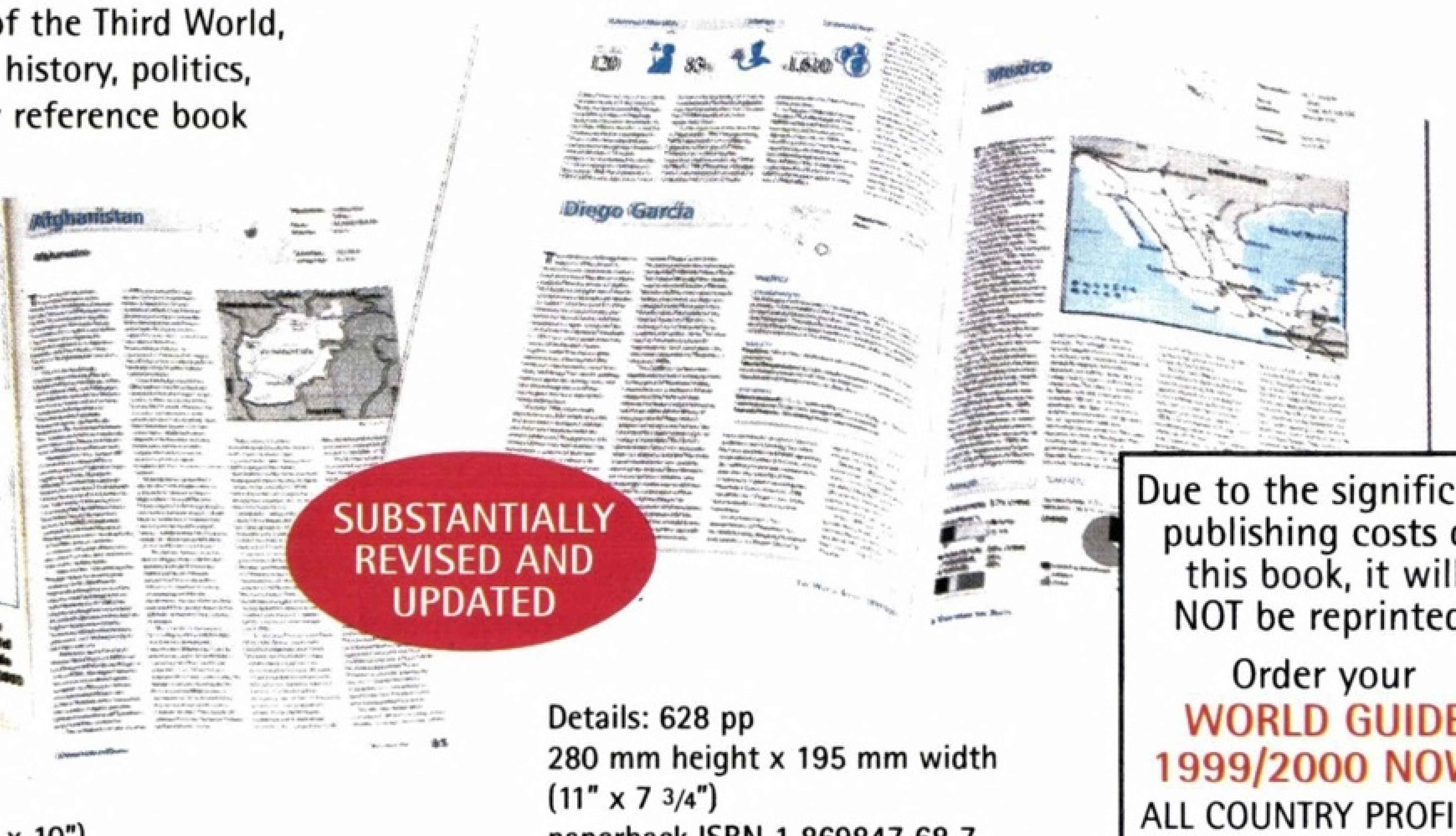

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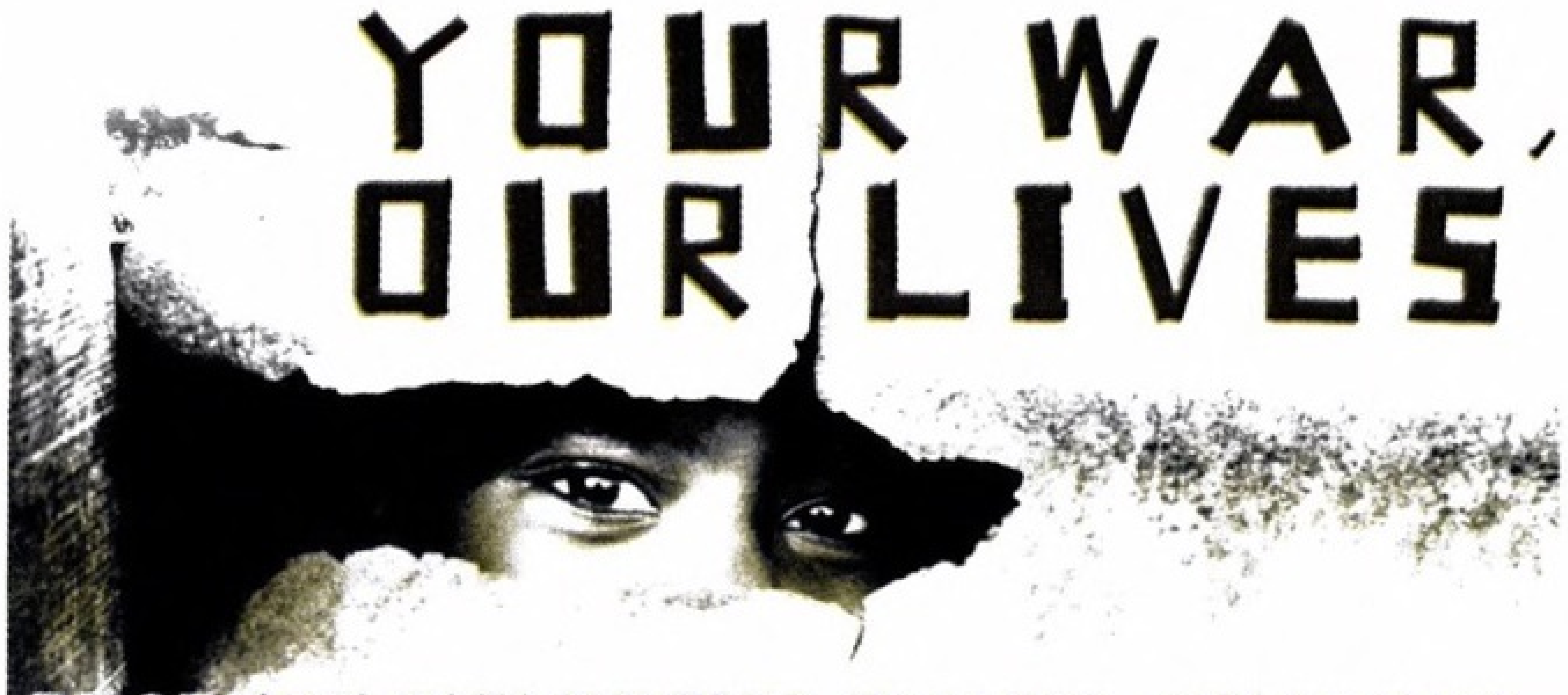

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In a world of growing instabilities - the time is right **to join CND**

The war in Europe - THE FACTS:

- The NATO bombing in Yugoslavia has increased international tensions, Russia have responded by delaying ratification of the START II Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty.

CND'S view:

- Conflicts in Europe should be dealt with by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, backed up if necessary by a UN peace-keeping force, raised from "neutral" states.

India and Pakistan's nuclear arms race - THE FACTS:

- The crisis between the two countries is becoming more and more war-like and there have been increasing reports of fire being exchanged over the Kashmiri border.
- Because India and Pakistan have not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty there is no obligation upon them to place any of their nuclear facilities under international safeguard.

CND'S view:

- In developing nuclear weapons India and Pakistan are simply following the line taken by countries like Britain and the U.S. that nuclear weapons are essential for their defence, we can expect more countries to follow suit.

The terrorist threat - THE FACTS:

- Around 50 Russian "suitcase" nuclear bombs are missing without trace and nuclear weapons materials are sold openly on the black market.
- Plutonium and uranium, which could be used to make crude weapons, travel by road, rail and air everyday, with no real security.

CND'S view:

- Plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium production must cease and existing stocks be immobilised.

Weapons still on Cold War alert - THE FACTS

- 36,000 nuclear weapons remain on alert ready to fire.
- There have already been several near tragedies, with weather satellites and flocks of birds mistaken for nuclear missiles by radar systems.

CND 'S view:

- All nuclear weapons must be taken off alert immediately to reduce risks, build trust between nuclear nations and help them along the path towards true disarmament.

But is it possible to create a nuclear-free world?

More and more people, including former heads of state and ex military leaders, are saying that it isn't only possible but **essential** to ban all nuclear weapons. Without a global ban on nuclear weapons, materials and technology the nuclear menace will spread further out of control - wasting money, wasting lives and threatening the future of our planet. Join us and help scrap nuclear weapons.

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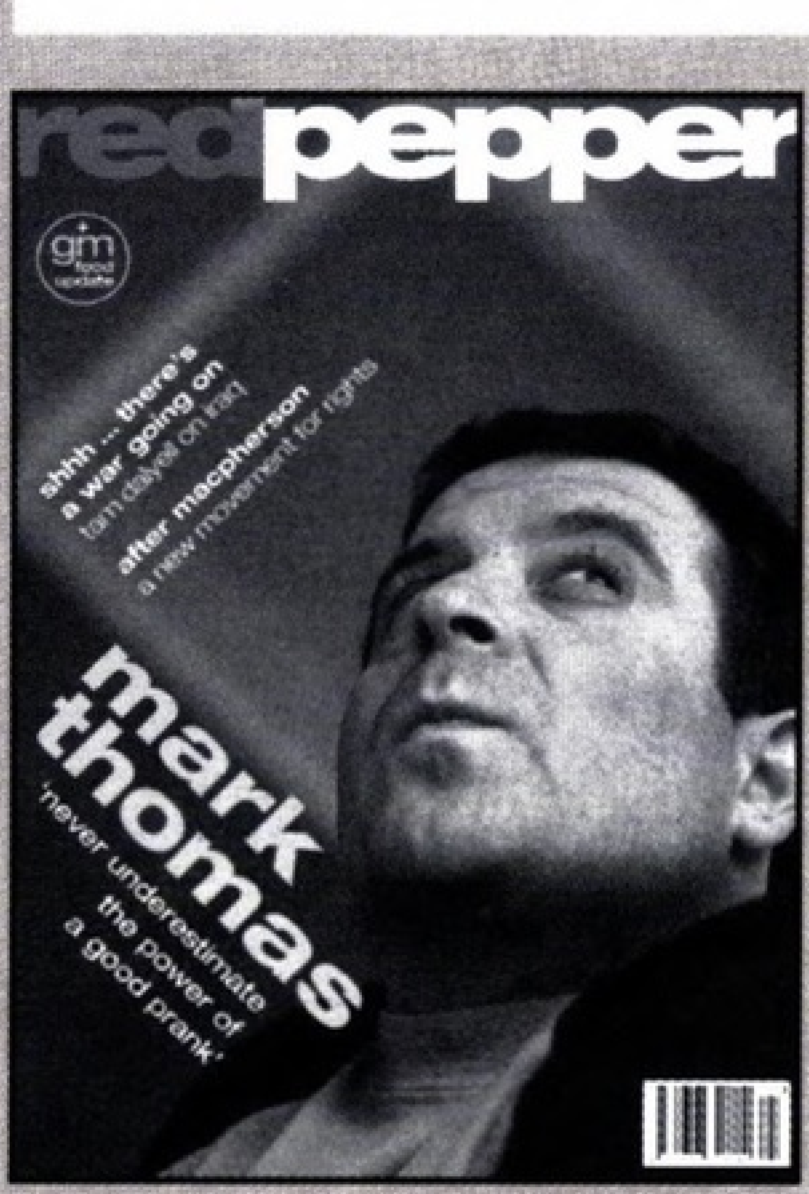
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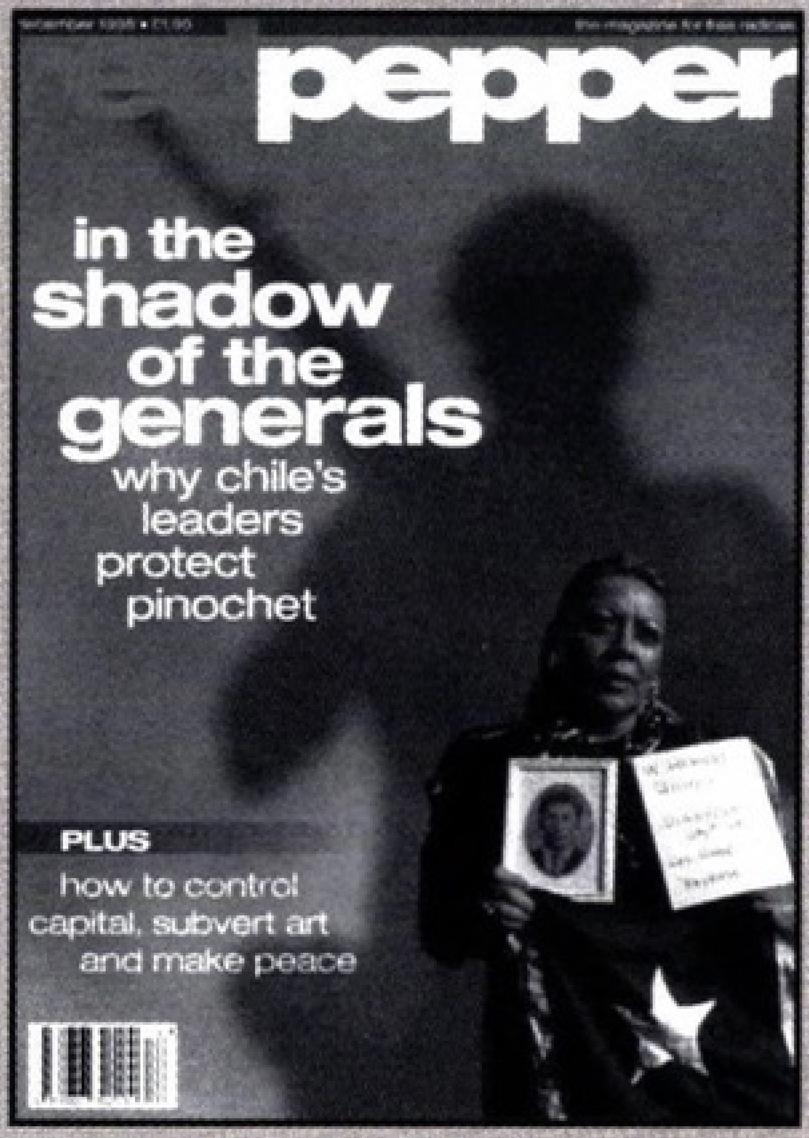
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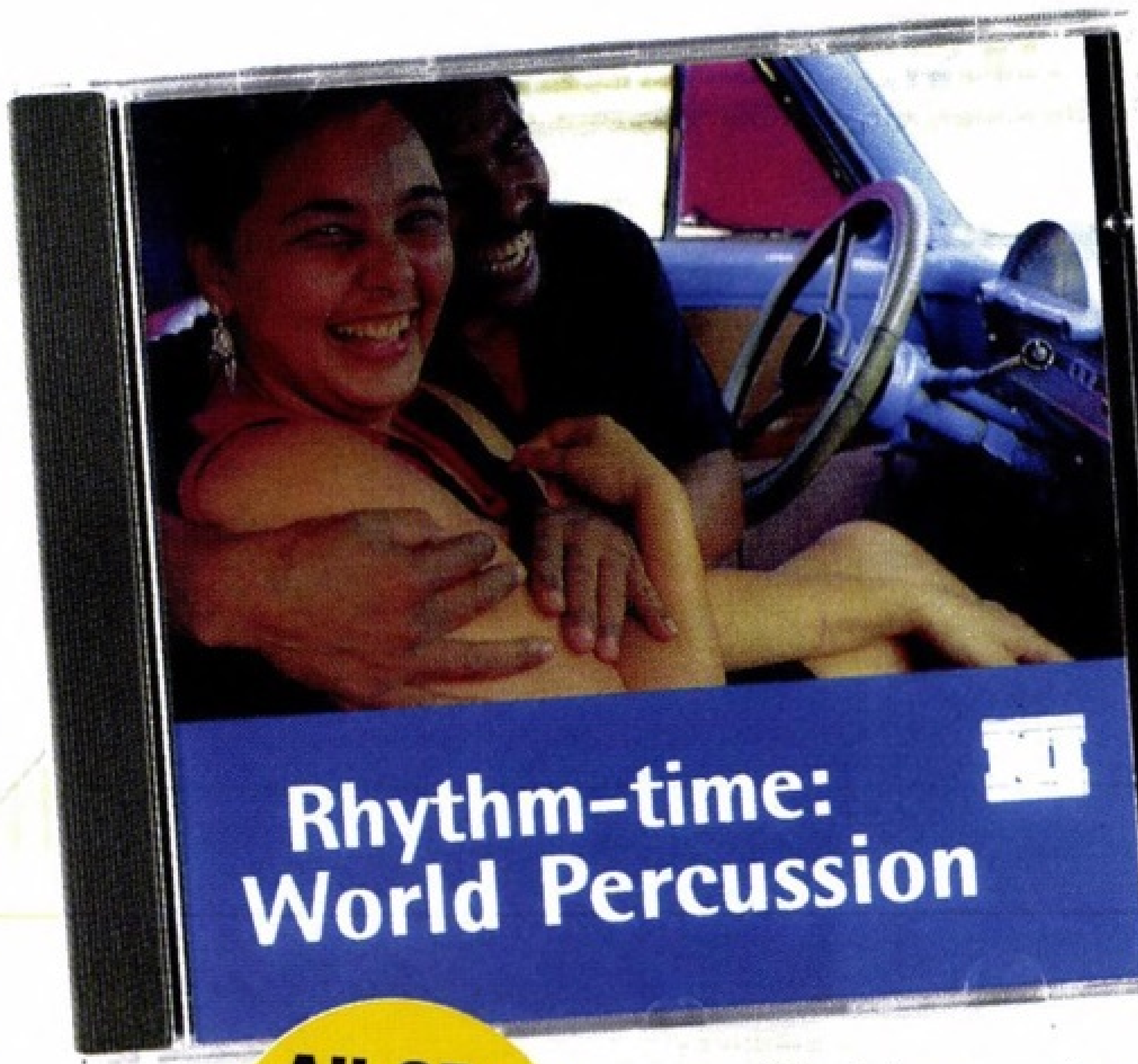

RHYTHM TIME: WORLD PERCUSSION

A drumming and percussion journey across the world and through the ages. From the thunderous sounds of Nigerian Fuji dub and Brazilian batucada to the stunning intricacies of Afro-Cuban rumba. There is an astonishing array of percussion instruments such as Ghanaian djembes, Indian tablas, Senegalese talking drums, Zimbabwean mbiras, Arabic daraboukas and Cuban congas. Contributors include the great Brazilian master Airto Moreira who features on two tracks, Ifang Bondi who are one of West Africa's leading pop groups, the Karnataka College of Percussion from India and a range of celebrated artists from Cuba, the island which has produced a host of dance rhythms adopted by musicians throughout the world. This album provides a fascinating insight into the wealth of world percussion.

'Not a decent tune on it! Tremendous banging and hammering from all over the world.'

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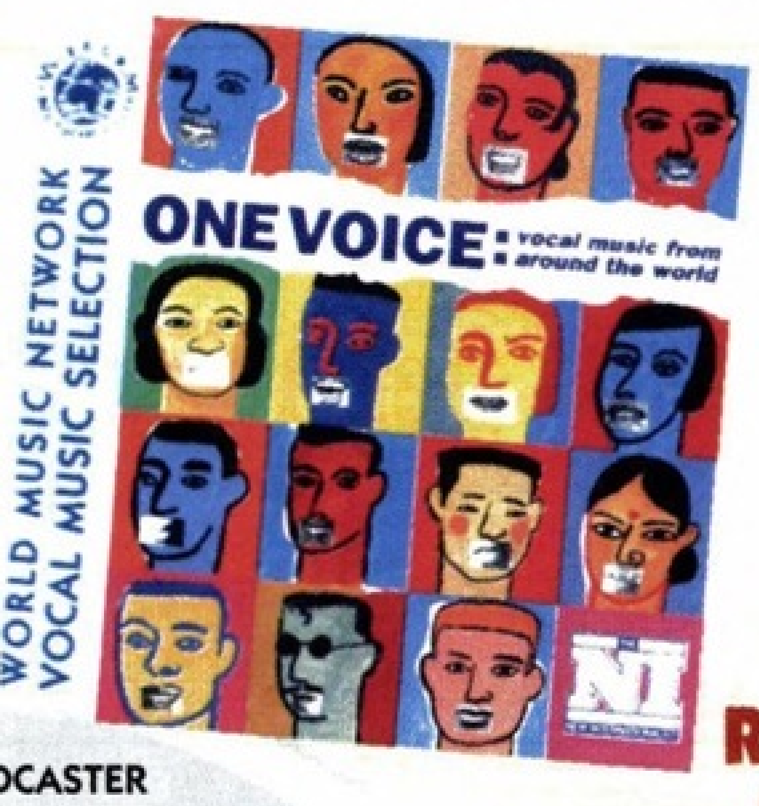

The world's musical diversity is reflected by the human voice in all its intimacy and grandeur. This unique album compiled for New Internationalist switches from the throat singers of Siberia to Polynesian choirs, and features internationally acclaimed artists such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo, The Trio Bulgarka, and Billy Bragg.

"An astonishing showcase for the breathtaking versatility of the world's most important instrument"

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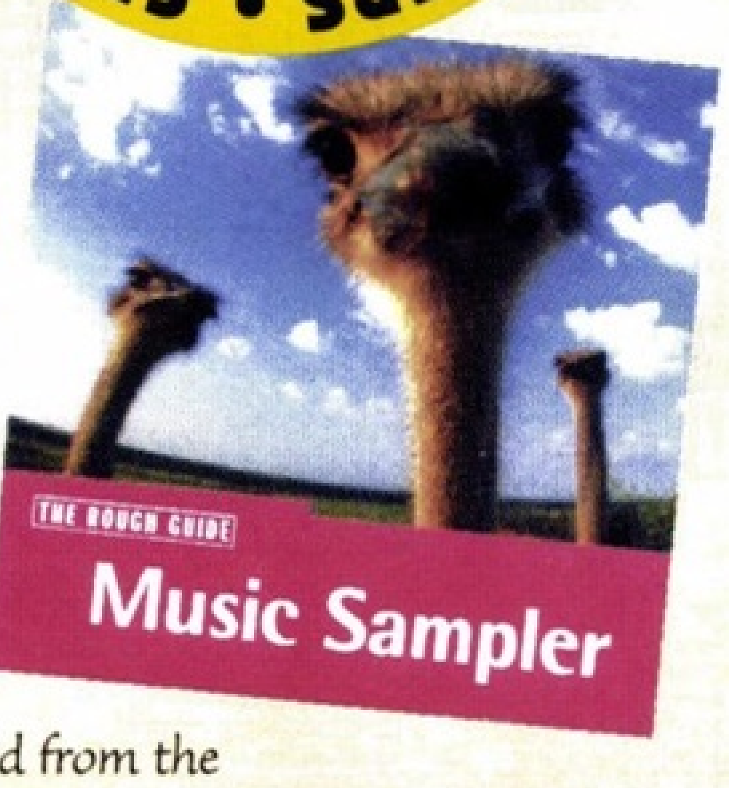
THE ROUGH GUIDE
Tango

TANGO

Forget the image of mannered ballroom-dancing. Tango is a real roots music: sometimes sleazy, sometimes elegant, but always sensuous, rhythmic and passionate. This album features Carlos Gendel who before his death in an air crash in 1935 transformed the formerly lowlife dance style into a mass culture enjoyed by all social classes. Also Astor Piazzola, the key figure in the history of modern tango, and many others, to provide a comprehensive view of Argentina's best loved export.



ROUGH GUIDE MUSIC SAMPLER

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A roller coaster ride of 16 tracks selected from the wide variety of albums produced in the Rough Guide series since 1994. Examples of the albums and musicians featured are from Zimbabwe - Thomas Mapfumo, The Andes - Into Illimani, English Roots - Hank Dogs, Cajun and Zydeco - David Doucet, Reggae - The Congos, Jazz - Bessie Smith.

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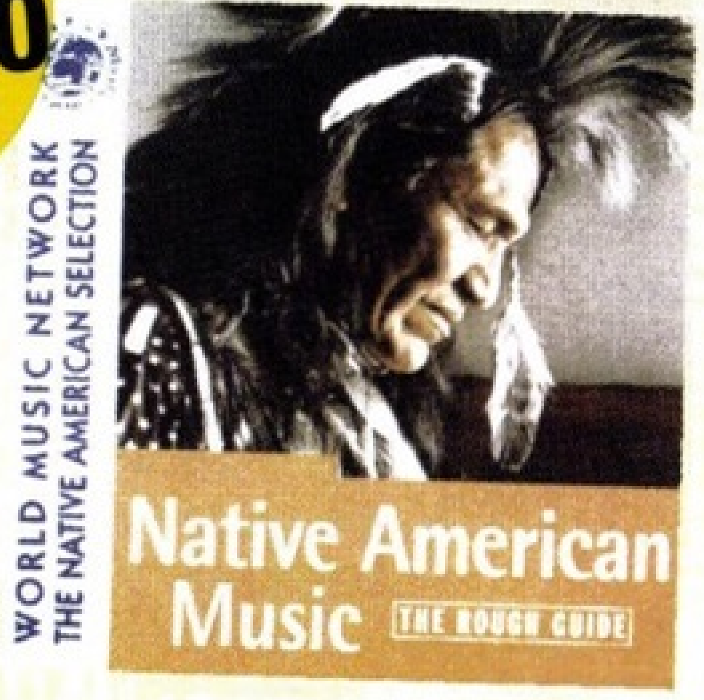
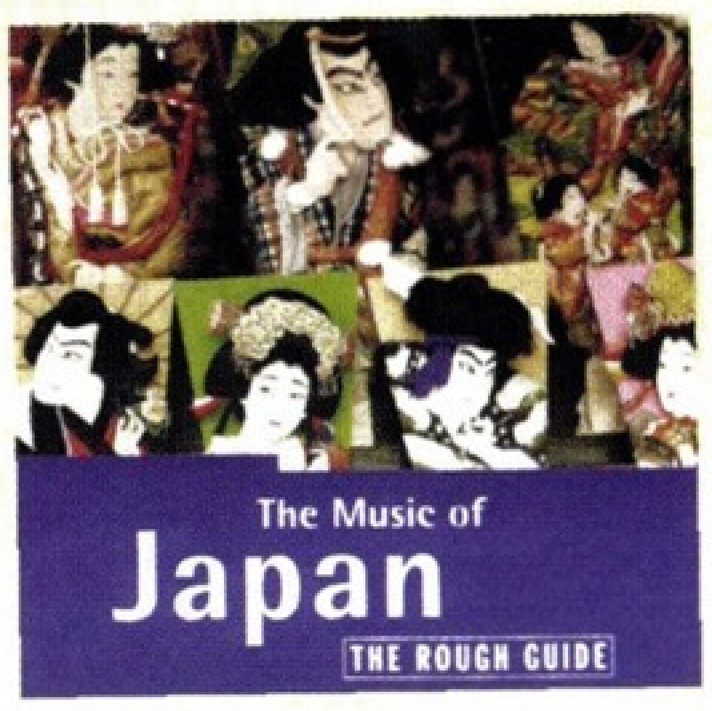
NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC

From powwow to polka, from sacred songs to cross cultural and urban sounds this album displays the full range of Native American music. Recently there has been a major revival and this is showcased in this album which features the contemporary flute, guitar and percussion of Burning Sky, the uplifting vocal harmonies of Walela (featuring Rita Coolidge), and singer-songwriters Sharon Burch and Bill Miller.

"Recommended. A splendid assortment....... **". CLASSIC CD**

"This listenable collection welds accessible updated songs with traditional chants, ceremonial pieces and dances. **" Q**





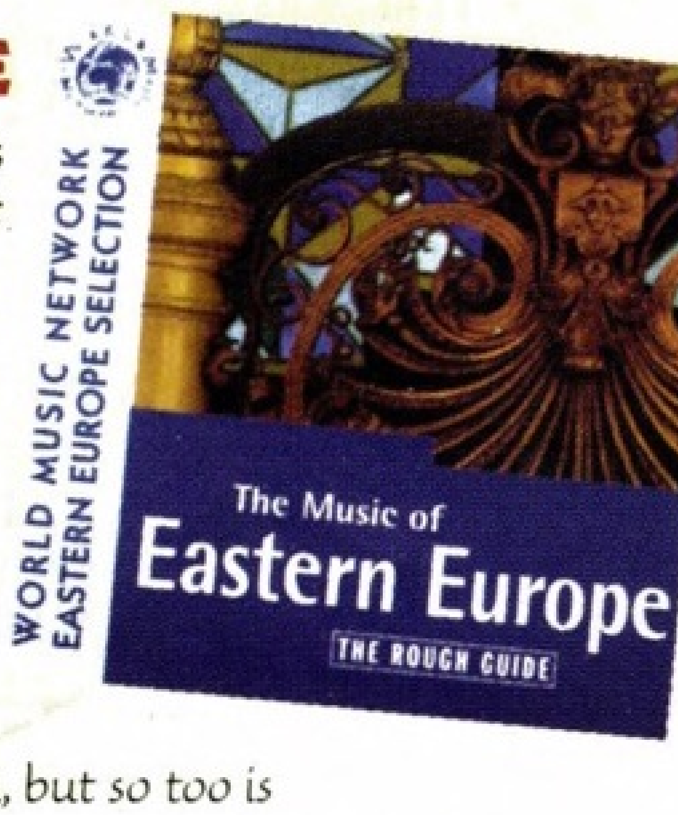
JAPAN

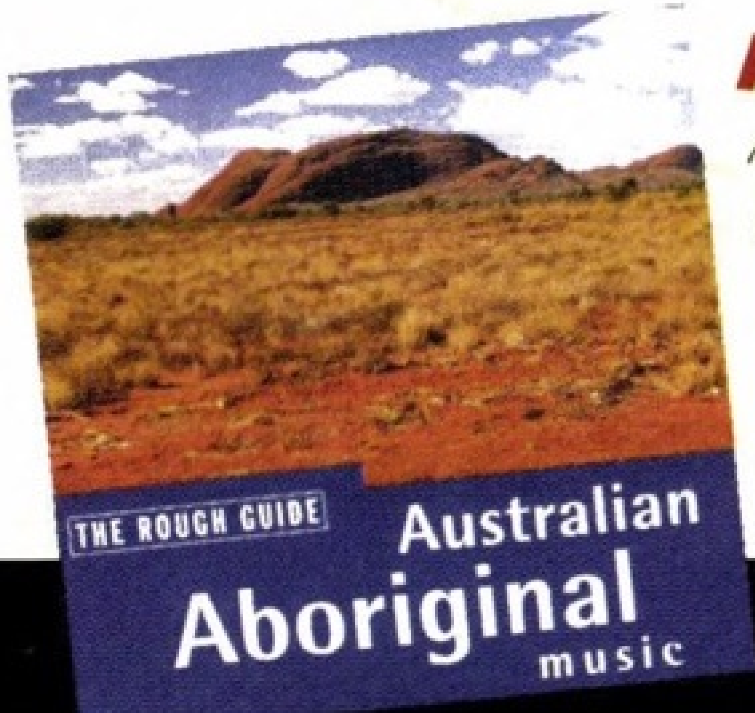
Just released, this unique album offers 75 minutes from leading Japanese musicians who display a fascinating mix of traditional music blended with contemporary sounds. There's a fresh surprise in each of the 19 tracks, whether it is the James Bond Theme played by the Surf Champlers, the beautiful and haunting music produced by the kotos (zithers) of Koto Vortex, or the thrilling energy of the brass band Cicala Mvta. Many of the performers offer radical interpretations of traditional songs and are clearly well attuned to modern music in other cultures. Stick this on your Sony for a real treat.

EASTERN EUROPE

A rich collection from this musically and culturally diverse area. Some of Europe's foremost and most inspired vocalists are featured. Marta Sebestyen, the greatest interpreter of Hungarian folk music and featured on the soundtrack of The English Patient, The Mystery of Bulgarian Voices Choir with their famous traditional and complex harmonies, and Trio Bulgarka. There is exuberant dance music from Apparatshcik (Russia) and Ferus Mustafov (Macedonia) and the rich culture of the Gypsy people is demonstrated by Tarafde Haidouks (The Orchestra of Honourable Brigands).

"It's a splendid sampler" SONGLINES





AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL

Against a history of exploitation and pain Aboriginal artists have now arrived as a powerful force in contemporary music and one bound up with the struggle for land rights and an end to discrimination. Politics is always on the agenda, but so too is spirituality. Singer-songwriters include wife and husband. Ruby Hunter and Archie Roach. There is also traditional music in its purest form with several field recordings. And, of course there is the didgeridoo whose deep resonant tone has become the most distinctive addition to contemporary Aboriginal bands.

All music produced by World Music Network. All CDs are £9.95 and Cassettes £6.95.
To order these albums please use the order form stitched between the back cover and the rest of the magazine.